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# THE GOVERNMENT OF MAN

# THE GOVERNMENT OF MAN

AN INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS  
AND POLITICS

BY

G. S. BRETT, M.A. (OXON.)

"MEN are governed by many things, by climate, religion, laws,  
precept, example, morals, and manners, which act and react upon  
each other, and all combine to form a general temperament "

MONTESQUIEU.



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## PREFACE

THE following pages have been written to give an introductory account of the conditions under which practical ideals have been formed, and of the forces which have produced the most prominent theories. The study of ethical theories is too often conducted with no immediate reference to the historical setting of each theory; even political science is often divorced from the events which gave vitality to the theories; and every experienced teacher knows the practical difficulty of supplying a background for the continuous development of theories. These pages are an attempt to meet that difficulty. The political and ethical theories are outlined; the immediate circumstances are indicated; and the outstanding features of the transitions from period to period are briefly noted. In selecting the material, particular attention has been paid to the subjects most akin to ethical and political problems; social life, religious movements, and the relation of the different classes in the different communities are the most relevant topics. To secure brevity the ordinary historical material has been omitted; an appendix to each chapter gives the

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principal dates, so that the student may easily keep in mind the relation between the text and the general history of each period; some writers not dealt with in the text are indicated in those tables. The books named in each appendix provide material for further study; extracts of considerable length have been inserted to emphasise certain points and bring the reader into contact with other works. This is not intended to be a history of ethics, or of politics, or of civilisation; it is an attempt to keep before the reader's mind the continuous interaction of the different factors, which ultimately produce types of civilisation, forms of government, and theories of conduct.

G. S. B.

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## EPILOGUE

# THE GOVERNMENT OF MAN

## PROLOGUE

§ 1. THE life of the individual is a series of events more or less capable of becoming a system. As a rule, *the life of the child is less organised than that of the adult*, and maturity is the period of greatest organisation. There are, of course, many different types of organisation: in some cases a high degree of concentration upon a single idea or purpose will produce an exact adjustment of every other part of the person's life to this one end; and this may occur very early in life. Still, in reference to the average man, it is true that life exhibits a process towards unity of system, and we may accept the formula that life begins in action and ends in conduct. Conduct, in this terminology, signifies action brought under a rule, and corresponds therefore to what we mean by moral as opposed to non-moral action. In this context moral means simply "regulated by a principle." The distinction of goodness and badness does not appear until we distinguish within the sphere

of moral action the species called good and bad. When that is done, the moral (as opposed to the non-moral) subdivides into moral and immoral.

The popular use of the term moral limits its meaning to the idea of goodness in some particular reference; the wider meaning of the term survives only in certain technical phrases, such as "the moral sciences." This degeneration of the word is very intelligible, for in the last resort conformity to a particular system of ideas has always been the essence of morality, and being "good" has generally meant being in agreement with other people's views.

But we require the word "moral" in its more secular significance to denote all those developments of life which are either roots or branches of conduct. The moral view of life will then have for its sphere more especially the analysis of social life.

It is now a trite saying that societies are not made but grow, and the analysis in this case must exhibit that growth by taking social life at various stages of its growth. At each stage the developments promised by an earlier stage must be accounted for either as fulfilled or atrophied. The endless variety of this life makes difficult the task of selection, but already students of the moral sciences have marked out departments, and, what is more important, the moral life itself has evolved into more specialised and therefore more distinguishable functions. Of these we select, as covering all that can be brought within the scope of our treatment, four main groups—the economic, the political, the social, and the religious. Each of these can constitute by itself the centre of a

science whose radii are infinite. But for the present these are not to be centres at all: they are to be themselves radii of another circle whose centre has no distinctive name, consists in no distinctive matter, is not an "entity" definable in a word. We call it, for convenience, "individuality" or "personality": sometimes it seems more correctly called "spirit," or the "moral nature." At any rate, it is beyond a doubt the "soul" of life: it has shared the fate of the soul in being made sometimes an entity, sometimes nonentity: the science of the moral self has followed the science of the psychic "self" in sometimes treating its subject as an unrevealed mystery and sometimes boldly dissolving all that it is into all that it does. We leave the tragic history of the science untold, and turn to our task. A definition of the moral self can only be the product of a wide survey, an intuition into the meaning of endless detail: the kind of definition which Plato so well knew to be an understanding of the whole through separation and reunion of its parts.

## NOTE

On the distinction between action and conduct, compare Spencer, *Data of Ethics*, chaps. i. and ii.



PART I  
THE ANCIENT WORLD

## CHAPTER I

### SOME ASPECTS OF EARLY CIVILISATION

§ 1. IT would be natural to call this a chapter on primitive morality, but there is a flavour of contempt about the word primitive which makes it offensive to the unprejudiced ear. The beginnings of that social life which is our present heritage have one characteristic too often overlooked: that characteristic is efficiency. It is unwise to beg innumerable questions by loosely calling the oldest organisation "primitive." In so doing we are probably influenced by some particular phase of the social life. Doubtless its dress belonged to fashions now out of date; its machinery was not of the kind to excite a modern manufacturer's envy; its weapons of war had neither range nor power, and gave too much chance of escape to an enemy: in brief, its science was either contemptible or non-existent. But granted this fact, can we say the moral life was "primitive" in the sense of being contemptible or non-existent? Apparently not. Nothing is now clearer than that progress in the moral sphere often outstrips progress in the economic sphere so far that people ignorant of all our modern sciences have yet equalled, or more than

equalled, the modern organisation of social life. In fact, the historical development of the West indicates a kind of alternating activity in these spheres: morality at one time seems to be centuries ahead of the material or economic status; then again a vital interest in the earth and the fulness thereof leads to material prosperity, and the moral tone of a preceding generation is partly lost, partly superseded. The discovery of moral ideas that are of great antiquity and yet not primitive was to some a shock: primeval man was not considered to have any right to such "advanced" ideas: there was something painful in the effort to grasp the fact that rigid laws and social discipline might exist among people who did not dress "like Christians."

§ 2. The period of surprise ended, and the "noble savage" came to more than his own. He was then (most conspicuously in the eighteenth century) the true type of unsophisticated integrity; for civilisation was artificial; the country was made by God, the town by man; somewhere beyond the limits of history lay a golden age where in primeval forests dwelt men lofty of stature, no less lofty in mind, too simple to be immoral and too natural to be civilised. So the pendulum swings from extreme to extreme; the twentieth century may boast a more rational estimate. Amid the gloom that hung over the first struggle of man with Nature there shone more than one star of comfort: accustomed to fight as animal with animal, man treats his own kind as another sort of animal; but he does not therefore omit the animal's virtues, its quick response to kindness, above all its

liking for the companionship of its kind: out of these simple relations we must suppose man began the formation of societies. Every step in social progress seems to be a reform; there are no creations, only cures. The mere fact of coexistence produces unendurable conditions; what cannot be endured must be cured; and so with terrible convulsions of "society" a fresh start is made. From this follows the corollary that social progress is not purposive. It may be that "through the ages one increasing purpose runs"; it may be that in all social ambitions we have manifestations of the self-development of the spirit; but that is faith, the substance of things hoped for; what we see is a continual interaction of forces, an inexplicable production of crises, a most grateful appearance of a genius who accomplishes re-adjustment; and therewith the prospect of doing it all again next time.

The characteristic feature of all primitive life is the narrowness of the outlook. The individual is bound down to the demands of the moment. Food and drink for himself and his family are the first requisites. Hence the dominant factors at this stage are economic: as Aristotle puts the case in a phrase that is now immortal, man desires first to live and afterwards to live well. There should be no prejudice against the recognition of the animal character of these aims and desires. The literature of the moral sciences shows a deplorable tendency to shirk the facts by either making primitive life idealistic beyond all the warrant of facts, or, on the other tack, admitting the brutality that characterises some primitive life and pretending

that civilisation is but a deceptive crust over the surface of volcanic emotions.

The course of our narrative will, perhaps, justify the assertion that neither view is correct. The simple fact is that society evolves, and, properly interpreted, evolution means sooner or later a complete transition from one condition to another, a complete transcendence of one group of interests over another, a movement that is never without starting-point and cause but yet is at the same time a creative movement. Whether this movement is also a progress we do not yet profess to know: that question will be easily solved if we can decide, after reviewing the stages of evolution, that the world is better to-day than when its history began.

§ 3. The importance of economic questions in the early history of mankind is due to the primitive man's lack of control over Nature. The stock of implements is inadequate and, what is still more important, the perspective is limited. The former difficulty is surmounted to some extent comparatively soon: the plough and the mattock become adequate if not graceful, but the organisation which makes distribution possible and counteracts the variability of seasons is a later product of experience. In this we see what will be noticeable throughout history, that inventiveness and organisation are not by any means the same thing. The belief of the Greeks that statesmanship is the supreme science rests on no fanciful basis. The devices by which individuals overcome their own difficulties are but the raw material of economic progress: the genius that unites men in a way that makes easy co-operation and distribution of the indi-

vidual output, is relatively far more important. And this corresponds to another distinction that is universal. As the basis of life is the senses and the satisfaction of the bodily needs, so the effect of relief from immediate demands is to set free the imagination and give rise to an inventive play of the mind. When primitive man is not at work he does not lapse like an animal into sheer inactivity. In some way or other his surplus energy finds an outlet: he delights to create myths that provide satisfaction for the curiosity and are the outward manifestations of the workings of his mind; he devises signs and symbols of his thought, and unwittingly begins the history of art, of hieroglyphics, and all that now is in the way of science and literature; last, but not least, he invents, and so gradually draws himself away from immediate dependence upon Nature. But this second stage is not the last. Beyond imagination is reason, and the function of reason is different from that of the imagination. By the use of reason man will substitute science for empirical guesswork; he will begin to solve his problems away from his material, and earn the suspicion of the ignorant by getting practical results out of magical signs on pieces of paper; lastly, some will move away altogether from a direct contact with things and, ceasing from the labour of the plough or of hunting, withdraw into a realm apart. Then at last society will have achieved one great end: the thinker will be separated from the man of action, and the legislator from the common people, and the organisation of communities will become a conscious part of man's life.

The attainment of this degree of civilisation was a long process. For the most part we can only guess how the result was attained, for at that point history begins and what went before is still only partly revealed by the labours of the anthropologist. As our field will necessarily be limited to the shores of the Mediterranean and the culture which is rooted in those regions, it will be sufficient to describe those features of this type of civilisation which seem to belong to primitive man all the world over and also have a definite subsequent history in Europe.\*

§ 4. The unit of all primitive organisations is the family. This is the unit which is natural in the narrow sense of the word. From it springs first the system of control which originates in the inevitable differences of its members. No one thing in the history of the world has had more effect than the natural overlapping of the generations. From this simple fact springs a whole system of relations beginning with the rule of parents over children; from it too comes the first variety of the child's environment, and consequently the first objects of its imitative powers. The fact is so simple that it is hardly ever expressly mentioned, but for the reflective mind it is the very essence of the whole philosophy of life in societies. As we cannot allow our imagination to dwell upon all the possibilities of this subject, we now turn our attention to the most noticeable of these natural relations, namely the rule of parents.

We may think of the typical family in early times as comprising the father, the mother, the children, and such adjuncts in the way of slaves or adopted

members as might be found for various reasons under the paternal protection. This imaginary group would in practice always include more members than a single generation: the "father" would in reality be the progenitor of children's children and so be more appropriately called a patriarch. Thus Nature herself seems to indicate that a patriarchal society is the original type.

§ 5. The patriarchal theory of government will be found in later times the basis of much dogmatism: it behoves us therefore to move cautiously in the consideration of the actual existence of this form of social organisation. In the first place, Nature has not absolutely decided the very important question whether the father or the mother is the natural ruler of the family. Even if we had no evidence for a rule of mothers, there would be a further question as to whether the natural head of the family was also the natural head of the clan. For the community of adults requires at times a ruler in the prime of life, and the patriarch would tend to be the oldest inhabitant—a very interesting authority on the past, but not an efficient leader in war or an effective originator of new policies. There is, in fact, evidence that under some conditions the mother was regarded as the head of the community, and questions of descent or inheritance were decided by reference to the mother's and not the father's family. The conditions which favoured this course were economic. Investigation has shown that we cannot accept the old theory according to which families united to make clans, clans to make tribes. On the contrary, the most primitive form of



union seems to be a group, a mere collection of persons for such purposes as hunting. Such a group is little more than a herd or "pack" (as some writers actually wish to call it); and there is within it little or no organisation. The few recognised principles relate to questions of food and offspring. The game captured is common property. The women are regarded as a class, not as individuals; and a man is married to a whole group, not to one member of it. Here, however, we come upon one very important regulation. While the "pack" was a loose aggregation of persons, the totem group was a definite "body of persons, distinguished by the sign of some natural object, such as an animal or tree." The effect of this distinguishing sign was to keep apart those who belonged to different totems. The totem groups might unite for work or play, but each remained distinct. Within a totem group the members were of one kin and might not marry; marriage was thus regulated by the idea of kinship, for the result was the prevention of marriage between near relations. This salutary measure may have been due to experience of degeneration: there is no definite evidence on the point; but it seems clear that the principle was some idea of the well-being of the race.

Beyond this regulation there is no other sign of refinement. The members of one totem group are *ipso facto* wedded to the members of another; in practice there was probably selection and considerable lessening of the promiscuity implied; but the most interesting point to notice is that the conditions of life demanded nothing more. Where there is no property, no cul-

tivation of land, and no occupation but hunting, domestic affairs are of little importance.

§ 6. That stage of human history which is best described as savage, is primarily the stage of predatory life. In it the struggle to preserve life leads only to increased physical power and the kind of cunning by which animals are outwitted. A change of almost incalculable significance was made when animals were not only caught and eaten, but also kept and used. The domestication of animals necessarily produced a new type of life. The activity of the hunter is spasmodic; the forest is as the unharvested sea, open to all; a man has only what he can get. In direct contrast with this, the owner of flocks and herds must tend his animals continuously; he will feel that he has a right to them as being something apart, not the chance products of Nature, but the expected outcome of his care; he will learn a new and more stable form of life. Thus the predatory gives place to the pastoral life, and the change involves a host of other changes. The family now becomes a peculiar mixture; it comprises man and wife, children, the accompanying animals and their offspring. Man has found in the animals his salvation, and is not ungrateful. He lives with his four-footed friends on terms of intimacy; the task of rearing their offspring falls upon him; there is between man and beast a new law and a compact of peace for mutual benefit. The importance of this new status is seen in every direction. There are things to possess that are not, as the bow and arrows, merely personal; there is property in a wider sense, because cattle are capital, they give increase, and instead of merely

wearing out, they continue and multiply. An occupation is now found for women which makes them economically important; they have value, and are worth many oxen. They too are a good investment, as they may give increase of helpers; women, children, and slaves are all swept along in the new-found zeal for wealth. Only one factor remains to check progress—the weary movement from camp to camp, the pursuit of pasture often difficult to find, with consequent loss from drought, fatiguing journeys, and godless marauders.

The removal of these difficulties depended on the possibility of domesticating the food as well as the feeders. Agriculture was the solution of the problem. With agriculture begins what might be called a domestication of fruits and vegetables. Man no longer goes out to hunt for his cereals; they can be localised as well as his animals, and to some extent he obtains control over the quantity of the supply. Two ends are achieved by this step. The support of the cattle is more assured, because pasture-land can be supplemented by cultivated fodder; meat is not required so constantly, and if it is not obtainable there are good substitutes. Life becomes less precarious. The sweat of the brow may be involved, and toil may be thought a curse; but drudgery has its reward: the world learns, for better or worse, the meaning of purposive labour—in a word, industry. In relation to the social structure, this step is no less important than the former: it is not so revolutionary, but it has far more influence in the way of consolidating human customs. This is due to the way in which it enlarges the idea of

property and develops the relation between personal efficiency and comfort. Desire is vain if it leads only to discontent or robbery; united with the power and opportunity of production it is the driving force of civilisation. To increase and multiply and live long in the land, this is the simple formula of the happy life which no age or place entirely rejects.

With this brief indication of the steps by which man passed from savagery to civilisation, we go on to consider the main features of life under these new conditions. In so doing we cross the line between the prehistoric and the historic, to enter on an evolution that has known dates. Hitherto we have been in regions of time where there are no fixed marks; in place of "periods" we speak of "stages," and rely upon the evidence of relative inferiority or superiority in place of a chronology. For the remainder of this chapter we shall be concerned with a dim borderland partly historical, partly traditional, a region of survivals and new beginnings.

§ 7. The typical Aryan group of primitive times was patriarchal, and its government developed accordingly. The patriarch was the acknowledged head of the community, the source of law, the director of conduct in daily life, and the authority in matters of religion. This early form of society soon changed, but its principles are clearly visible in what we may regard as the germ of all Western political organisations, the Homeric society. In this the early simplicity is already lost; in place of the patriarch there is a king who is only metaphorically "father" of his people; there is a body of advisers formed of the elders as being men of

mature experience; there are the "children" now become a people that gathers in an assembly to hear the decrees. This can only be called a "family" in a very metaphorical sense; yet this is the organisation which we meet in Roman legal theory described in the language of family unions. It is interesting to inquire into the origin and nature of the changes that separated this Homeric society from the conjectural rule of the patriarchs.

It is necessary to remember that for practical purposes blood-relationship is an hypothesis, kinship a fact. In other words, the essential point is the belief in a real unity of all who belong to a clan or tribe, and this unity is interpreted as kinship whether there is or is not actually a common ancestor. In historical times there was always an element of fiction in the idea of tribal unity. Some of the "brethren" were known to have come from other stock, sometimes through adoption and sometimes without even that "legal fiction." Yet when the actual relationship failed the idea of a common ancestor was retained for its inherent value. Religion, always the ally of ideals and a strong support in the preservation of beliefs, became the means of supporting the fiction and making it a practical reality. Before tracing the further evolution of society in its political aspect, we may pause to take stock of our knowledge about early religions.

The foundation of law is custom, and custom has no known origin. Man awakes to find that habits have been already formed in his individual life when he was acting without any idea of forming definite

tendencies. Communities also seem to wake after a lapse of time to find that custom lies upon them "with a weight heavy as frost and deep almost as life." In affairs of importance the advice of the elders is sought, and they tend to recall previous similar cases or hand down time-honoured maxims. A well-established custom acquires the force of law. Some actions have more significance for the whole community than others, and in reference to those actions custom is made obligatory; to break the custom is to endanger the welfare of the whole community, so that in these cases the community protects itself from danger by taking action against the individual. At that point custom attains an added binding force and takes on the character of law. Further complications arise when religious sanctions are added.

§ 8. Custom, law, and religion are in the beginnings of civilisation three aspects of social unity. They depend in the first instance on the simple fact mentioned above, the overlapping of generations. In virtue of this the individual who wants to do anything finds, in most cases, an established way of doing it; and that applies to all actions, whether great or small, from butter-making to "rain-making." A custom is a mode of action which one generation adopts from another, a racial habit. A law is a command to act in a certain way because that way is deemed best, and usually amounts to enforcing a custom or explaining the relation of a new problem to old solutions. Finally, religion towers above all these because from the first its essence is to be transcendent. For religion is like science; it belongs more to the macrocosm

than to the microcosm, to the universe than to man. The resemblance is a curious point to notice: the conflict of religion and science began in the cradle of humanity; they were always rival theories of the way to approach, become intimate with, and be reconciled to the powers that are above man.

Transcendence is essential to religion both as regards persons and societies. The individual grows up among persons that are above him; the elders overshadow him in strength and in wisdom; they belong to years that are gone, and before he was they were. In time he may become as strong and as wise as they are; but he gains his superiority by a long apprenticeship, and when he stands above his fellows he is still conscious of a wider society in which he is no more than an infant, the great society of the dead. For primitive people, so long as they are advanced enough to be a people rather than a herd, blur the distinction between living and dead; neither birth nor death is a limit of existence, but each is rather a stage in a never-ending process, similar to the transition from boyhood to manhood. There is, thus, a society beyond the living society; action has significance beyond the limits of one's fellow-men, and is pleasing or displeasing not only to the visible but also to the invisible witnesses. In brief, there is a social as there is a physical macrocosm; that which is known widens out into the unknown, the finite into the infinite.

Religion is a distinguishable aspect of life, but not therefore unique. It is distinguishable not because its sphere is superpersonal, for custom and law are

also superpersonal; but because it reaches out to that which is beyond all men and all societies. It is not unique in any aspect. Psychologically it depends upon emotions that are common to other departments of life, principally fear and love. Its objects share with nature the quality of being uncertain because they are inscrutable. Its symbols share with law and custom the power of an established order. No profit comes from isolating religion for separate investigation; it must be taken concretely as one aspect of an indivisible whole; perhaps in some sense it is the whole, as summing up in itself the entire scheme of life. At any rate, the historian of primitive social life can afford to treat religion as the reaction upon life of those ideas which go beyond the individual's existence.

Though religion and science are united through having as a common sphere the unknown that lies behind customary actions and events, they are destined to become in time separate and opposed. That development comes later; at first the rift is imperceptible; nature is an object of worship even though to some small degree it is understood and put to use: it is an object of the emotions that sustain religion, and so fitted to be itself one of the objects of religious acts. Any attempt to classify primitive types of religion has to encounter almost insuperable difficulties, arising from the interconnection of social functions, relations of the living to the dead, the relation of man to nature, and the feelings which make up the individual's personal experience. On the other hand, the numerous varieties seem always to



be varieties of one type, and it is possible to indicate as fundamental some characteristics of that type.

The typical primitive religion is a system of practices by which the individual comes into communication with the god. The desire of every man is to do the will of God, for that is the action which alone is profitable unto all things. But it is not given to every man to know the will of God at first hand. What he learns first is the established belief which in this case constitutes ritual. Ritual is custom in the sphere of religion, so that for practical purposes religion is conformity to custom in affairs that concern the gods.

§ 9. There is something strange in a definition of religion that contains no reference to belief and includes no element of personal conviction. Yet the facts seem to support the definition; it is not faith but works, not creed but ritual, that constitutes primitive religion. The explanation of this is to be found in the social character of religion. The god is primarily god of the tribe or clan; to him the whole nation prays that he will grant their desires; to him they look for aid in times of war or famine, and in times of prosperity they do not forget him. He is the strength of the nation because he is author and ground of its unity. From the belief in this super-personal power springs a host of customs in which all members of a community share. The origin of these customs is frequently unknown; more often than not the reason for the ritual has been forgotten long before any question of its value is raised. When questions are asked they arise from curiosity, not

from scepticism ; the desire to know why such actions are performed is not associated with any doubt as to the necessity of keeping up the traditional practices. So the question is easily answered by any plausible tale that ends with the existing condition of things. These tales, called myths, are genetic theories of the things or actions which arouse curiosity. Out of this same root will come science and philosophy and history. We put mythology now in a class by itself ; it implies the opposite of science ; yet in its nature mythology has just the scientific quality of being a hypothesis that seems verified in fact. Its fault is not in being imaginative, for the imagination is the essence of constructive thought ; but in caring too little for all that contradicts its constructions.

Ritual and myth together make up the substance of religion ; we now go on to consider its functions. These are included in one comprehensive function, the preservation of the common good. As it is assumed that the god gives to his worshippers good things, all prosperity may be ascribed to his favour, all distress to his displeasure. Hence the ritual tends to consist, first, of regular forms of worship, in which the community prays, or gives thanks, for regular benefits such as good harvests, rain in due seasons, and the like ; secondly, of special rites for crises such as failure of the crops, or impending invasions ; thirdly, of disciplinary proceedings when the conduct of an individual is considered likely to cause the wrath of the god.

The reasons for disaster are always either the anger of god or the ascendancy of some other god over the

protector of the tribe. In the latter case explanation involves a theory of evil spirits, and the development of an elaborate "theology." In the former case the wrath of god may arise from sin in the community. To avert the consequences of this sin is therefore one of the first duties of those who stand between the community and its god, whether kings or priests. Expiation is demanded from the detected sinner in various forms and degrees. In extreme cases excommunication is pronounced. In its earliest history excommunication is literally exclusion from the community. The terror of the sentence is great because of its necessary consequences. In modern times the exile may go to another land; the man on whom the ban of one church falls may join another or remain outside the pale of the Church. Not so in primitive communities. Taken and thrust out of the community, the guilty creature wanders homeless and friendless, a prey to beasts and men, with no right to justice and no claim to pity. The community casts off its guilt and its responsibility, leaving the sinner to a fate that could not be doubtful. Under such conditions there is no reason to wonder that religion was absolute in its control of the individual; when the gates of his city closed on him the condemned man left his world. Even when the sentence was deserved it was a harsh fate; but there is a still gloomier phase of this idea of guilt. Prevention is better than cure, and in some cases the tribe anticipated the wrath of the god by a purification from unknown guilt. It chose from its members one man, or sometimes a man and a woman, laid upon the elect the sins of the community, and

drove them out to carry away with them the sins of the nation. The Semitic and the Greek religions afford the best examples of this practice known to us by a phrase now no more than a metaphor, making a person a scapegoat.

Religion is primarily social, and the established religion of a community includes, as we have seen, worship and discipline. In these, as in other aspects of primitive society, there is a tendency towards suppression of the individual; it would seem, from some accounts, as if there were no individuals at all in these early communities. It is undoubtedly right to say that unity was the first object of social institutions, and that the unity was too rigid to admit much individualism. On the other hand, we should not lose sight of the fact that these societies were made up of men not wholly unlike ourselves, persons capable of harbouring selfish desires, prone to indulge private loves and hates, capable of sacrificing the public good for private advantages. This aspect naturally appears in connection with religion, because the business of those whom we should now call the "lords spiritual" was to safeguard the community against the disaffected. As the god is a tribal god such flagrant offences as treachery in war or betrayal of "state secrets" come naturally under the head of religious offences. So also do crimes which affect the life common to the god and his people, such as murder, which was not only punished, but also expiated. In these and other ways we see how fully the religious bond was regarded as affecting the whole life of the community. But it is desirable to modify this idea of complete unity by reference to at

least two other points. In the first place, worship was public in the strict sense of belonging to the state; perhaps the habit of repeating the formulæ aloud arose from a desire to make sure that every one was saying the right thing at the right time. But this did not exclude private worship or prayers for particular benefits in which only one person or family was concerned. Neither did the tribal character of the god prevent individuals from having gods of their own or from exercising their power of enlisting divine aid in private enterprises, so that there was from the first some degree of independence. The name "fetich" has been given to that which the individual worships as distinct from the object of common worship. A similar distinction arises in the sphere of magic, according as the magical rites are employed for purposes advantageous or disadvantageous to the community. Into the subtleties of these two great subjects it is, fortunately, unnecessary to enter: they have been introduced to illustrate one point, namely, the character of early nonconformity and the fact of recognised individual action in the earliest times. The rift between public and private interest has always existed, perhaps always will exist, in practice.

## APPENDIX

(a) The eighteenth century is well represented by Pope, *Essay on Man*, Epistle I, 100. An excellent epitome of the ideas of a Golden Age is given by Hume, *Principles of Morals*, sec. III. pt. i.

(b) On the nature of primitive society see Aristotle, *Politics*, bk. I. chap. I. A brilliant sketch of primitive

life will be found in J. L. Myres, *Dawn of History* (Home University Library). Tylor, *Anthropology*, chaps. xv., xvi., should also be read.

(c) On the patriarchal form of society see Maine *Ancient Law*, chap. v. ; Sidgwick, *Development of European Polity*, Lect. iii. Other references : Hobhouse, *Morals in Evolution* ; Jenks, *Elements of Politics* ; Marett, *Anthropology* (Home University Library).

(d) See especially Jevons, *Introduction to the History of Religion*, for the subject of § 9.

## CHAPTER II

### SOME ASPECTS OF GREEK SOCIETY

§ 1. BETWEEN the darkness of unrecorded ages and the full light of history there is a transition era. The history of that intervening period is incomplete, but in one way or another definite records of its culture were made and handed down to succeeding generations. In the case of Greek culture the epic poems represent that era. In Homer there are signs that the record covers a long period of gradual evolution; it is a record of continual change and of a struggle between old and new ideas. Only the most general ideas can be gathered from such a record, but they make a welcome background for later phases of history.

Greece in the Homeric age was the meeting-point of an original Aryan culture and an aggressive Eastern culture. In this interaction the East gave and the West received: the East was the producer, while the West was the consumer. The East is represented by traders, mainly Phœnician, whose commercial interests bring them into touch with Greece as the gateway of the West.

Much that has already been said will apply to the Greeks of the Homeric age. Their culture has passed

beyond the crude state of the predatory period and the first form of a pastoral period. The life of the Cyclopes is described as contemptible; they live in isolated groups, ruled by patriarchs without traditions or precedents; they depend upon the flocks and herds which are their only possessions; their existence is brutish. Their main defects are ignorance of agriculture, lack of communication with the rest of the known world, and the absence of established laws. These are, therefore, the points which we expect to find improved in the Homeric civilisation itself, and to some extent this expectation is realised. In addition to sheep and goats the Homeric chief owns cattle, especially horses and oxen; his lands are rich with useful crops regularly tended by his serfs; he has respect for the gods and some men, being at least capable of just dealing. The grosser forms of conduct have disappeared; in the daily intercourse of equals there is dignity and the recognition of principles remarkably lofty for the time. In the sphere of religion there is a similar advance; human sacrifice is a thing of the past, even animal sacrifice is restricted, and only on rare occasions is there any sign of excessive disregard for the life or the feelings of animals. Many points might be cited to prove that the Homeric age was far from being a Golden Age; but a fair critic will admit that those are mainly "remnants of that primeval slime from which Hellenism was trying to make mankind clean." <sup>1</sup>

In its political organisation the Homeric age stands between the early patriarchal type and a pure national-

<sup>1</sup> Murray, *Rise of the Greek Epic*, 16.



ism. The differences noted above show how far a change has been wrought, how far the "rule of the Cyclopes" has been left behind. But there is in these changes something more than direct development. The basis of rule has changed. The conditions which favour a patriarchate have given place to an age of violence; the strong man is required to hold together the tribe, lead it in battle, and be an overlord in deed as well as name. So the patriarchate gives place to the monarchy. It is the refuge of man from anarchy, the unity that makes strong. In the words of Homer, "the rule of many is not good; let one be ruler, one be king." But this one is not an elective monarch; the rule belongs to him "to whom the son of Chronos has given it," that is, either to the hereditary chief or to the strongest man. This divine right was a valuable asset. The king combined the functions of general, chief judge, and high priest. In virtue of his superiority he ruled as one that is in a class by himself. Usually the common interest made it advisable to consult the elders and also to enlist the sympathy of the whole body of those concerned. Thus the proceeding was democratic in form, but in fact the king's decision was his own act. Only the necessity of carrying the people with him checked arbitrary decisions. This necessity was all the greater because the subjects of the king were often themselves chiefs of smaller clans, or men with claims to "divine descent." Sedition was always possible, and a king could not afford to estrange his nobles.

§ 2. The Homeric society belonged to a transition

period in two distinct ways. First, because it arose while there was a steady migration from the north down towards the Ægean Sea, ending in a distribution of the northern people over the land east and west of the Ægean. Secondly, because it belonged to a people settled in scattered villages, normally separated one from another though capable of uniting for purposes of war into a league; it was a league of this kind that produced the army led by Agamemnon against Troy. The end of this movement is marked by the beginning of the Polis or City. At some date, probably the tenth century, the small villages united; the people drew together into settlements surrounded and protected by a wall; city life began, and with it a new era in the history of civilisation. From that date the ancient monarchy was doomed; the movement towards republicanism was made possible. Political life went through a series of experiments by which each part of the original political order was put on its trial. Monarchy was succeeded by aristocracy, the nobles taking the place of the king. Aristocracy then gave way to democracy. It was a downward path that ended finally in the restoration of monarchy on a new scale and in a new sense.

The age of the Homeric kings belonged mainly to the period of migrations. When monarchy gave place to aristocratic rule a second movement took place. The original invaders from the north had become settled inhabitants before the eighth century; they had mingled with the earlier occupants of the lands bordering on the Ægean, and that race which we usually call Greeks had begun its existence. The

second period of movement began about the eighth century, and produced the settlements east and west of Greece, in Asia Minor and Italy. In a word, the nations that descended from the north had spread over the southern peninsula and fused with its inhabitants; they had become a new nation which began very early to send out colonies; for the next two centuries history is guided by the reaction of the colonies on the mother-cities.

§ 3. Historians have agreed to recognise something almost miraculous in the development of Ionian civilisation along the coast of Asia Minor. It is a phenomenon for which no adequate cause can be named. Yet the conditions were not abnormal. On the contrary, everything favoured the production of a new type of civilisation, granted that capacity for progress which is the gift of Heaven. We have seen how custom is the ruler of primitive mankind. It ruled then, as now, because perpetual sameness breeds a rigid conservatism. Its power is always broken when opposing ideas collide and intertribal communication makes it obvious that the customs sacred to one tribe are a matter of indifference or abhorrence to another. But mere collision is not enough; fanaticism quickly leads to extravagant condemnation of the "barbarian" or "infidel" and consequent "crusades." Beneath the clash of customs there must be some indifferent element, some neutral factor which makes it worth while to tolerate differences of belief. That factor has usually been trade. The economic relations between peoples can be established without reference to religion. A

man will deal with his neighbour when he will not eat with him or pray with him. The example had been set by the Phœnicians who sacrificed to trade all sentiments of religion and even patriotism. As a result they became a mercantile people, the carriers of merchandise all through the eastern Mediterranean and the Ægean: they can hardly be called a nation, so readily did they absorb foreign elements. In striking contrast to this plasticity stands the rigid conservatism of the Hebrew. Yet the Jews are no less a proof of the way in which trade-relations exist along with violent social or religious antipathy. The Ionian Greek seems to have had by nature the saving grace of tolerance mixed with national pride; they neither sacrificed their independence nor shut their gates in the face of strangers. Hence there began, from the interaction of various beliefs, the transmission of ideas, and the collision of customs, a new attitude towards the world of experience.

The typical figure of this era is Thales of Miletus, "a new kind of great man, not a king nor a warrior, nor even an adventurous merchant, only . . . a wise man."<sup>1</sup> His life strikes the keynote of the new rationalism; he ignores the superstitions of his age; he trusts to his reason rather than the gods; he is successful as an engineer, and a man to be trusted for sound, practical advice. In short, he began to analyse and find causes while others were still accepting the routine of nature without wonder or questioning. It was not an age of specialists, so Thales was soon reputed to know everything. He had his views on the making

<sup>1</sup> Murray, 233.

of the universe, on the gods, in fact, on everything. Those views have long since dropped into the limbo of antiquarian lore. Only one kind of work is truly immortal, the creation of method. Time brings to light new facts; old theories break up and dissolve by the very action of the evidence meant to support them; but a method is a living process which is never more immortal than when it enables others to pass beyond it. To call Thales a "forerunner of Darwin" is a stretch of language, yet the phrase may pass if it helps us to realise the importance of the new method and to give Thales his due credit. In one respect Thales was very like Darwin; he shook to its foundations the structure of popular theology. The religious life of Greece hereafter creates for itself new forms of expression.

The fall of the Homeric pantheon was not the work of a day. Evidence can be brought to show that the Homeric poems themselves underwent continuous expurgation to meet the changing sentiments of successive generations. To a large extent the changes were compromises. As the religion became universal it ceased to be local. "The twelve Olympians whom we find in Homer . . . do not represent the gods worshipped by any particular part of early Greece. They represent an enlightened compromise made to suit the conveniences of a federation."<sup>1</sup> The development of the Greek national life has thus produced automatically a religion that had the advantage of belonging to all, and the defect of belonging to no one in particular. From gods that are universal it is but a

<sup>1</sup> Murray, 235.

short step to a universal god ; but that step is revolution. It involves the destruction of traditional reverence and the creation of a new attitude towards the problems of religion. No changes affect so vitally the life of a nation as a religious change. When it comes the change is rather an effect than a cause, a symptom of convictions already formed rather than the origin of new beliefs. In the next generation after Thales the criticism of the old religions found an advocate in Xenophanes : the rejection of local gods developed logically into a rejection of personal gods and of gods made in the likeness of men. Xenophanes proclaimed the union of the idea of god with the newly won idea of the universe. "There is one God," he says, "supreme among gods and men." In that saying were united the spirit of the new cosmology and the proud superiority of science triumphing over contradictory superstitions.

§ 4. The strong point in the Milesian reformation was its science. Its cosmology is significant by comparison with the superseded cosmogony. The idea that the universe was a creature that had had a birthday long ago or had emerged from some primeval egg now gave way to the idea of a primary substance which was the matter of all things, the germ of a universe that had had a development analogous to the growth of plants and animals. The new science was little more than a new kind of mythology ; its "proofs" were still only fanciful analogies ; but it had achieved one truly scientific result in excluding from nature the capricious action of superhuman beings. And that was the result of more than one force. The Homeric

pantheon was intimately related to the Homeric social structure: its god was a patriarch converted into a king as the society moved from patriarchate to monarchy. The gods could only cease from their overlordship when men had begun to entertain new feelings towards the lords of the earth. Of this new feeling there is literary evidence. The manners of the ancients became a subject for mirth; they were material for good stories; <sup>1</sup> the actions which a later age reprov'd could be put into accounts of heroes and give the mind some relief in the contemplation of pleasant vices. Reverence was sapped at the root; the personalities of men and gods alike ceased to be sacred; only the impersonal seemed to retain the majesty of the heavens or inspire the awe that belongs to genuine religious emotion. Another significant fact is the poetry of Archilochus. The Homeric tradition is ignored by him; his appeal is to the people; his tone is intensely bitter and individual; he was a man that knew not "shame" in the old sense, but railed at his "betters" when he smarted under personal injury or a sense of inferiority.

Thus in some directions there was widespread discontent with the old order, contempt of tradition, a mixture of progressive and nihilist tendencies. But all stages of society are not equally affected by such movements. Ancient simplicity often continues in rural life long after city life has bred the shallowness that is the curse of all new movements. Often the new movement produces a reaction; too much seems to be

<sup>1</sup> The "Milesian stories" collected in the fourth century belong in spirit to this earlier sixth century. Murray, 239.

destroyed in the first onslaught on human traditions : the new ideas are not adequate to all sides of man's nature, and a reconstruction is demanded. In Greece the scientific movement proved barren of spiritual comfort. That was sought elsewhere and found in the so-called Orphic beliefs.

§ 5. The origin of the Orphic religion is not known. It was in many respects a revival rather than a beginning of religious thought ; it came at a crisis in Greek development to unite and make effective what are apparently the hopes and desires of all nations. It is obvious that the unrest of the eighth and succeeding centuries was followed by a period of mental strain. Reaction set in and took the form of a return to more primitive types of emotionalism. But the revival of older religious forms was not accompanied by a return of the old spirit of local worship ; the new religion was universal in its significance and not at all concerned with the propitiation of particular gods. It was, in fact, the first genuine expression of personal feeling in religious matters ; individualism was the keynote here as in other departments of life. Primitive religion was the affair of a community, and the religion existed for the sake of the community. Orphism, on the contrary, belongs to a new phase of social life ; the community now comes into being for the sake of the religion. So in place of a political society with an official religion we find a religious society apart from political interests, a brotherhood united by a spiritual bond and formed by voluntary union. This is a novelty of such significance as to deserve special consideration.

We have seen how in primitive religion individual



interests were merged in those of the community. The free movement of individuals from one community to another tends to destroy that condition of affairs. If the original religion of the community does not possess sufficient vitality it cannot stand against changes of sentiment produced by new social and political conditions. The Homeric and Hesiodic theologies were thus tested and found wanting. In their place arose a religion that combined with ancient traditions a new purpose. Primitive religion was also social in the sense that it was concerned with the welfare of the society, including under that term the ancestors of the living generations. The mind of primitive man seems to be concerned with the past and the present, not with the future. Orphism is distinguished by being concerned primarily with the individual and the future. We have noted already the decline of ancestor-worship. With that decline was united by force of circumstances a new social outlook. The centre of activity was beginning to shift from ruler to ruled, from superiors to inferiors. Homeric religion seems to be the reflection of a life eminently desirable; death is the end of that existence, the loss of all things good and the beginning of dreary inactivity. Orphism is the reverse. It is the religion of people for whom this life is sorrow, and death a release. In Hesiod we have continually this note of melancholy; the earth and the sea are full of ills. Under such conditions there is no hope anywhere but in the future. When life becomes valueless as a possession it may acquire value as a preparation. Orphism taught the individual to take this new view of life, to endure for the sake of the reward, to acquire merit

in this existence and so attain a better. The central idea was the pre-existence of the soul and its transmigration from one form of life to another. Whether the soul ascended or descended, as it passed from life to life, was dependent upon action; salvation was attained by works. Here more than anywhere the individualism of this religion is obvious. Class distinctions are no longer considered; rank and wealth are of no importance; the life of the soul is something apart from these, possessed by all alike, infinite in its capacity for development. In these respects there is a striking parallelism between Orphism and Christianity. Both are essentially spiritual, independent of political and social considerations, calculated to find ready acceptance by the outcast and the oppressed, able to uplift by restoring to men a sense of the eternal value of their own personality. It is true that Orphism was bound up with ancient rites and most of all with the worship of Dionysus. But these were no more than the forms in which was expressed a new spiritual movement. The great thinkers of Greece recognised in Orphism a moral force besides which peculiarities of ritual were insignificant.

From the first Orphism contained elements dangerous to the welfare of Greece. There is danger in any beliefs that cannot be either proved or disproved, of which the immortality of the soul is the most conspicuous. There is danger also in a religion which lays too much emphasis on feeling. Orphism in its development showed these dangers by producing a host of quacks and experts in spiritual progress along with that "enthusiasm" or religious emotionalism which springs

from and increases intellectual feebleness. In the time of Plato the genuine and the spurious forms of Orphism were distinguishable. The true Orphic worshipper made morality the centre of his religion; the rest relied upon charms and incantations to secure for them the rewards of a good life without its inconveniences. A true estimate of Orphism must rest upon a consideration of its moral significance.

§ 6. In historical times Greek morality was never quite identified with religion. Homeric theology existed together with a social morality which it did not originate or enforce. The life of the gods was described as comprising all that was desirable; it included a great deal that the human being desired but could not have. The earthly life involves restraint, and only the education of centuries can teach mankind that restraint is essential to well-being. At first there is a natural tendency to imagine the life of paradise as essentially an indiscriminate gratification of desires. The gods never hunger nor thirst, the climate of heaven is ideal, business is shamefully neglected. Such an existence would be bliss without alloy if one could only think of it as really justified. But man cannot. Above and beyond the gods there are forces to be reckoned with, dire necessity and that inexorable law of consequences which manifests itself silently in all experience. This was the limiting factor in Greek anthropomorphism; in making gods in the image of man they unintentionally created a morality which was above the gods themselves, in translating to Olympus the ideals of ordinary men the Greeks could not omit the social factors, justice and retribution.

Hence the paradox of a theology which is not moral united with a rudimentary metaphysic of morals. In the Homeric idea of conduct there is a strong sense of the nature and value of restraint. It is expressed partly in the idea of Fate as a power that overrules gods and men, partly in the idea of shame as a feeling which every normal man has about his own actions. The former is something above the human sphere, the latter is social. We might say that the former represents natural sanctions, the latter is a social sanction dependent upon consciousness of deserving praise and blame.

The defects of this morality are very obvious. It tended to be local and consequently to make its sanctions apply only to those who shared the life of the community. The "foreigner" required special protection in the midst of an alien people. It also encouraged shiftiness, setting most value on success and making escape from detection more important than uprightness. As the tribal religion lost its value some progress was made towards establishing deeper principles with more spiritual significance. The Greek drama exhibits this tendency, laying emphasis on Atê as the inevitable doom incurred by guilt. Unfortunately, in practical life the doom was uncertain. The mills of god grind slowly, and men are ever ready to discount a penalty postponed too long. Popular views on that question are represented in the gnomic and lyric poets. One maxim runs: "Flatter your enemy until you have him in your power and then wreak your vengeance." We may be sure that many were found to appreciate the advice.

Even in the drama there are signs that some forms of morality were hardly yet understood. The tormented hero longs for the power to inflict similar torments on his foes. Everywhere the same tone seems prevalent; the desires crave for a satisfaction which is only renounced because some higher power threatens subsequent doom. And that higher power is not so much just as relentless; it brings down ruin upon the children of sinners for a guilt not their own; it is inscrutable, pre-eminently a source of tragedy, a source of paralysing fears and blind submission.

§ 7. On such a background Orphism stands out with unmistakable significance. To make man the cause of his own acts and master of his own destiny is to restore the fallen spirit to a consciousness of dignity and worth. This was the aspect of the religion which found expression in Pindar and appealed to men like Socrates and Plato. Under better social conditions it might have been an adequate basis for the foundation of a pure and universal morality. It degenerated into empty ritual and charlatanism because the strain was too great. To be good is difficult when it involves ignoring the methods by which others prosper. Morality withers in an uncongenial atmosphere. There must be support for the individual in society; goodness and conformity to social custom cannot remain for ever antagonistic; as Plato saw, the state and the individual must have one life and one spirit. The problem of morality then becomes the problem of justice.

The Greek conception of justice shows exactly those characteristics which are seen in its ideas of religion

and morality. It has primarily a universal significance. The principle of order in nature is "justice": the distribution of the elements is a kind of "justice" in the early cosmological theories, and if the due proportions of earth, air, fire, and water were not preserved there would be "injustice." Among the Greeks ideas about the universe were generally applied also to minor systems, the cosmos of the society or of man. Justice in the state, as in the universe, is the right distribution of the parts; every man has his due, or rights, and to abstain from overreaching is justice. So far Justice is really universal law, ultimately the natural law that governs the world, the inherent regularity of the celestial bodies. But for practical purposes justice is a correction of irregularities among individuals, the justice of the law court. The idea of universal natural law was not at first distinguished from positive law, because the ruler was not regarded as making but as interpreting law. But the distinction quickly arose when it was obvious that the judgments were "crooked." In Homer, and still more in Hesiod, justice is a calamity: it is legalised tyranny. Apparently there was at first voluntary appeal to an umpire, who expounded the "rights of the case" according to his knowledge of tradition. To know precedents was a mark of wisdom. From the custom of appeal grew regular courts, and it became possible to force the defendant to come before the arbitrator, though apparently in many cases it was more profitable for him to stay away. In Greece, after the eighth century, political justice was very generally defined as the interest of the stronger,

and with good reason. No theory of justice is found except the crude attempt of the Pythagoreans; probably the idea of retaliation, the old rule about "an eye for an eye," formed the basis of criminal jurisdiction; while disputes about debts, theft, and the details of trade or navigation were settled by reference to custom or by bribery and corruption. The reform of the law courts was a perennial theme both in theoretical and practical politics. But reform of the national character was far more urgent. Plato could look back upon the historical development and see that the first idea of justice was the best: only as something eternal, immutable in principle, and universal, could it be fully known: only through such complete understanding could it command willing obedience. Justice in the state is never more than the outward sign of a general will to be just; without that will there cannot be justice, but only an empty parade of litigation. Here, as elsewhere, we see the outcome is a demand for a reformation by which the spirit may triumph over the letter, piety superseding ritual, and justice superseding legislation. This demand for depth and sincerity was finally expressed by Socrates. It came too late. The democracy had already begun to gather impetus and descend the steep path to destruction. The Greek wanted liberty, not law. We must glance for a moment at the evolution of this national temper.

§ 8. The social organisations of early history are more obviously dependent upon economic conditions than those of the present day. Taking our stand on the soil of Attica in the seventh century, and looking

backward, we can picture the changes that had come over the life of its people. The rule of Homeric kings was already a dim memory; the power of the aristocracies was already waning. Some could remember the days when no man owned any part of the land; all land was common property in theory, though in practice it was held by families, at the allotment of the King. Then almost imperceptibly a change began to come. The land filled with discontented men; some were retainers of noble houses now no longer able to support them; some were the younger sons of aristocratic families for whom there was no inheritance worth having; many were mere agriculturists who saw in trade an escape from their innumerable evils. Then came a period of calm; the aristocrats encouraged colonisation and shipped their undesirables to the other side of the Ægean. But the bonds of union between mother-city and colony were many and strong; if the aristocrats sped the departing colonists in expectation of entire relief they were mistaken. In the new colonies there was something like a fresh start; every man had his own allotment of land; invidious distinctions of class were at least negligible if not utterly obliterated; the colonist was a man of free thought and free speech, not unwilling to return to the old country and show his brethren what could be done when a man had a fair chance. So the political scheme frustrated itself; the policy of the aristocrats was the effective source of democracy. In this there was no place for regrets; the change seemed inevitable. The family system gradually evolved into a State; the



conditions of life in the State weakened the original power of the head of the family, for the individual members acquired greater independence; the property, formerly held as the possession of the family, was divided up into private estates; the unity of the old system was too rigid and could no longer be maintained. At the same time manufacture began to supersede husbandry; the idea of producing more than was required for living, in order to accumulate wealth, led to an industrial system based on slavery; money was now introduced, and with it began the subtle transition from the satisfaction of needs to mere money-making. Wealth became a new factor in the State, and the struggles of the next two hundred years centre round the problem of the relation between wealth and political status.

The nobility of a country always has a power of cohesion which does not belong to the poor. Possession of land, careful selection in marriage affairs, and opportunity for uniting in the maintenance of privileges, are all factors which make for consolidation. Against this the poor have only one resort, co-operation. We have already seen how the rural population broke away from the traditional religion of the rulers and formed associations on an independent basis, and something very similar was effected in the economic sphere. As the nobles were organised in hereditary clans, so the lower classes developed an organisation of brotherhoods. As early as 650 B.C. these brotherhoods seem to have attained political significance. Their aim was to get formulated laws in place of the rulings of the nobles. They were re-

inforced by a new class of men, the crews of the fleet now becoming all important as trade increased. The result was a series of legislations; the reforms of Draco were followed by those of Solon, from which the Athenian democracy really began. In detail Solon's legislation was peculiar to the age for which it was designed, but its principle was of universal significance. Henceforth there was to be no master but the law: the officials who occupied the high places were responsible to the people: every man was the guardian of his own interests, an integral portion of the community. From this followed logically the method of Pericles; persuasion took the place of command, and the statesman was compelled to be a leader and not a driver of man. The ideal was that of impersonal law, equal for all; freedom was to mean absence of tyranny and loyal co-operation in the advancement of common good. The ideal was not realised. Beneath the movement lay the tacit assumption that all members of the community have by birth a share in political excellence. The fallacy of this assumption was shown in the later history of Athens; it was seen beforehand by Socrates and those who, following Socrates, held to the belief that government is a science requiring specialists, and not to be entrusted to well-meaning but incapable enthusiasts. At this stage we see clearly defined the central problem of government, how to unite the ideal of popular government with the fact of popular incompetence.

§ 9. In spite of close relations and continuous interaction the different parts of the Greek world retained

a peculiar degree of separation. In the fifth century it is still possible to regard Ionia as peculiarly scientific, the western states (Italy and Sicily) as the centre of religious reaction, while in political affairs Athens naturally attracted all attention. The one step that remained to be taken was the unification of life. It was achieved, but slowly. If we look back to the Pythagoreans we see a complete lack of unity; the life of the brotherhoods seems to have implied little or no consistency in beliefs; science and religion had no common ground. In the case of Empedocles there is the same lack of system; various things are explained in various ways, but the "universe" is the outer world, not experience as a whole; and so the outer and the inner world remain unconnected. Finally, in Democritus the analysis of the outer world was completed. Atomism as a solution of the problems of matter was destined to rule human thought because it was related to practical interests. It is necessary to remember that atomism was a dialectical solution of physical problems. It neither was nor could be experimental; it served no purpose of a physical or mechanical kind; it produced no significant change in daily life, and has no real resemblance to atomism as understood since the work of Dalton. Thus, we must look for the real significance of atomism in the sphere of culture. Then we see that it was the highest development of the scientific spirit which began its work in the days of Thales; it was the final indication of a kingdom of law, a realm where caprice did not rule, a world of eternal processes in which emotion was unknown and reason was un-

thwarted. The restless Greek always longed for some sure control of the passions. From Homer onwards the central antithesis of life is that between passion or emotion, and reason. In conformity with this inner tension we find the outer division; while science upholds the idea of law, religion supplies an outlet for emotions; while the world of nature is shown to be serene in its invariability, the cult of ancient deities furnishes an excuse for irrational frenzies. The Ionian spirit found its most complete expression in Heraclitus, for whom all things ceaselessly change and yet exhibit in that change an inexorable law. To bring man under that same law it was necessary to develop a theory of conduct in harmony with the theory of nature. Democritus began to do so; he proclaimed a reign of law in conduct that was not merely observance of custom; still less was it a recognition of the will of any god; but only the maintenance of a natural balance of the inner forces, a sweet reasonableness that knew neither the exaltation of enthusiasm nor the gloom of bitter self-reproach. !! 604

Man likes to regard himself as something unique; he has an instinctive tendency to think himself nature's great exception to her laws. The uprooting of this prejudice is most effectively achieved in the sphere of medicine. The culture of any age can be very accurately measured by considering its view of diseases, and medicine or the allied psychological work of any era in history has been one of the great determining factors of its life. In the fifth century before Christ the name of Hippocrates covers a wonderful advance

in medicine, and the writings of his school supply evidence of a new source for general theories of life. As examples of the way in which medical theory affected the development of thought the following points may be named. Man was regarded as more directly dependent on environment; from which follows the practical direction to improve the environment if you wish to improve men. The nature of man ceased to be a mysterious entity and was shown to be analysable into factors; character or temperament was shown to be a product of the so-called "humours," and the ideal nature was expressed in a formula of the mixture of the four humours. Lastly, those things which had most influence in supporting irrational tendencies were scientifically explained; seizures and fits were treated as diseases, not as possessions; dreams were not ascribed to Zeus and regarded as divine messages, but as symbols of such commonplace experiences as feverishness and indigestion. For the rationalism of this age medicine was a powerful ally. To prove the value of this influence one point only need be selected, the idea of function as resting on a right mixture of elements. In the physical sphere this explains health; similarly, moral health is a right mixture of reason and desire; and the best form of political constitution is that in which the parts are rightly mixed. In the present age we are familiar with the interaction of sciences. Novelists, politicians, and economists have taken from the naturalist his idea of organism; everything is a "function"; logic has its "morphology"; society is to be regarded biologically; above all, such a departmental term as

"natural selection" is found wandering in the most remote corners of the universe of knowledge. Something analogous to this marks the last stages of Greek thought. The formulæ of physics and of medicine control the thought of moralists and political theorists. The long-awaited unity of knowledge seemed about to be achieved save for one obstinate factor, mathematical certainty suggested an ideal of law that was not compatible with the variability of nature, and the desire for absolute certainty was sufficiently strong to make the greatest thinkers look for a science of nature that was mathematically accurate.

## APPENDIX

## (a) CHRONOLOGY—

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|----------------|--|
| B.C. 1300-1000 | . Approximate date for fall of Troy; epic poetry begins; Ionian colonisation begins. |
| 1000-900       | . Invention of Greek alphabet. Ægean trade conducted by Phœnicians.                  |
| 900-800        | . Beginnings of the City-State.  |
| 800-799        | . Rise of aristocracies; Greek colonisation.   |
| 650-600        | . Age of lawgivers in Greece.  |
| 594-591        | . Solon's legislation.   |
| 503-502        | . First year of Cleisthenic system.  |
| 493-492        | . Themistocles, Archon.  |
| 490            | . First Persian War.   |
| 480            | . Thermopylæ; Salamis (second Persian War).  |
| 460            | . Pericles at Athens; democratic development.  |
| 445-431        | . Pericles supreme in Athens; era of "Sophists."                                     |

CHRONOLOGY—*continued*.

B.C. 431 . . . Peloponnesian War begins.

420 . . . Period of Democritus; the  
atomistic doctrine formulated.

(b) Plato, *Republic*, bks. I.-III., gives an excellent account of early Greek thought. The corruption of Orphism is described in *Republic*, bk. II. For the political development see W. W. Fowler, *City-State of the Greeks and Romans*; Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth*; Acton, *History of Freedom and other Essays*; Grote, *History of Greece*.

## CHAPTER III

### GENERAL VIEW OF GREEK MORALITY

§ 1. THE study of political and religious movements is only part of the study of social life. Beneath their more obvious developments lies the real root of all institutions, the thoughts of the individual. 'As institutions, and the general environment, direct the activity of individuals, so again the individual striving shows itself, after a time, in some new institution or noticeable reaction upon surroundings. The study of theory is made easy by the permanence of records ; the study of practice is rendered difficult by the very fact that purpose expends itself in action, and those actions which make up daily life are too common to call for notice. There is consequently always a lack of information about the working principles of common people ; the average standpoint cannot be surely ascertained from historians, or tragedians, or philosophers ; we can only collect scattered points, watch for the occasions when a writer inadvertently states a principle as something commonly accepted, and so put together the fragments till we have some suggestion of the background to which belong the characters of the drama or of history. In this way we shall try now



to describe the actual principles which made up the morality of the average Greek in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.

The Christian era produced a type of morality very different from that of Greece, and consequently it is hard to grasp the Greek point of view at the present time, when Christianity has so deeply affected men's attitude toward life. We look to-day upon religious beliefs as the final basis of conduct; the will of God is the root of ordinary morality, however much the makers of theories may do to explain the evolution of morality, or, under the influence of the Greeks, to show the inherent reasonableness and utility of prevailing customs. The Greeks, on the contrary, had no such idea of a divine ruler. In general their basis was nature; they looked upon the natural as the good. So wide a generalisation must of course be qualified. Such beliefs as those of the Orphics were distinctively religious in character. Homeric Greece had its gods, and the idea of supernatural powers never wholly ceased to affect the conduct of the Greeks. But looking more closely we detect the features which make this religion different from the modern notion of religion. The Orphic doctrines centred around the idea of transmigration and the attainment of a final state of purity. But there is here no doctrine of redemption and no mention of the love of God. The other Greek doctrines were still more devoid of any idea of God as a supreme moral personality. The only successor to Homer's theology was the vague belief in one God, which was due to Ionian influences and represented the logical necessity of looking upon the

universe as controlled ultimately by one principle of action. When the Greeks passed beyond primitive tribal religions they ceased to have an effective theological doctrine. In its place they achieved a philosophical ethics, and this undoubtedly represents what may be called the Greek religion. For religion and theology are not to be confused. Any principles which a man regards as ultimate, which he uses as standards to guide his action and believes to be the secret of his best life, must be regarded as his religion. But in that case morality is the essence of religion, not religion the essence of morality. And that was in fact the average Greek position. It may best be described by noting a few salient features. All Western theology in the Christian era is controlled by the idea of God and of the devil. The Greeks had no devil, and that deficiency clearly marks the difference between the Greek and later uses of the name God. Similarly, the Greek has no idea of sin; wrongdoing is for him either infatuation or crime, either a senseless destruction of one's own good or an injury to society. When a deed is declared "impious," it is because through it the community may suffer harm. For such deeds there are penalties, as for blood guiltiness. But the penalty is a way by which society is appeased and the guilt removed. If in the earliest days this implied appeasing the wrath of God, that notion died out and the religious aspect of atonement was lost in the legal. Man has not to make his peace with God, but with his fellow-men. So again with conscience; there is no idea of that inner faculty which dictates the right always invariably and presents continually to the sinner the thought of the

eternal displeasure of the Almighty. Without these factors, a view of life cannot be called religious, in the usual sense of that term. But there is another side to the question. The fact is that for three centuries at least traditional Christianity has been affected by the study of Greek ideals, and, in consequence, the term "religion" has become very wide in its significance. We hear of a religion of humanity, for example; theological dogmas are set aside in favour of universal principles, such as the love of mankind; the ideas of the devil current in the middle ages are refined to the vanishing point; reason has become for some the criterion of religious truth and social welfare the criterion of good conduct. In this way there has been such a modification of earlier beliefs that we find ourselves stopped at every point when we attempt to determine clearly the dividing line between Greek and modern religious teachings.

- Christianity, in the strict sense of the term, rests on certain well-defined dogmas of which the Greeks knew nothing. But for some Christianity means essentially an attitude of mind, with no reference to such dogmas. For those Christianity is primarily social, and the central points are so far universal as to be found in pre-Christian views of life. The following points illustrate the degrees of affinity between these two types of religion. That God is to be considered as good, and the author of good, was a definite principle in Plato's time; a future state of reward or punishment, in direct relation to a man's life on earth, was also commonly taught; the conduct which earns that future reward was made dependent

upon the inner state, not the mere outward action, but the disposition of the soul, what in Biblical language is called purity of heart. So far there is similarity, but Greece was moving still within narrow limits, and those limits inevitably produced a corresponding narrowness of thought. The effect of limitation is seen most clearly in the stubborn way in which the Greek divides his race from all others. His duty is to his kin. He has not asked the question, Who is my neighbour? And in consequence he has not substituted for racial kinship the idea of human brotherhood. The slave at home and the barbarian abroad are not included in his idea of social obligation. Yet even here one point must be noticed which moderates our judgment. Plato at least saw that morality implied universality. The just man, he says, does not harm anyone: he does good to all irrespective of race, and he does good even to his enemies. But this with Plato is a product of his subjective view of morality; in taking his stand upon the inner nature of the agent, and not on the nature of the action, he was able to see that a man cannot be sure of the object of his action; he may find his enemy was a friend in disguise; he can only be sure of his own intentions, and he must always strive to have good intentions.

§ 2. The views of Plato mark the highest spiritual level reached by the Greeks. It cannot be supposed that many reached that level; there is evidence enough for very different views of conduct. The average Greek accepted the primitive maxim, Love your friends and hate your enemies; in the hour

of pain he cries out: "O that I could inflict such pain on my foes!" His temper was quick to develop either love or hate; he had no natural stolidity to assist him toward cool judgments. On the other hand, he had in a large measure the power to see the reasonableness of things; he knew well enough the faults of his nature and took, almost as a national motto, the rule, "In all things be moderate." The best age of Greece is strongly marked by this consciousness of being unstable; Heraclitus has the courage to take the instability as a fact, merely noting it as the man of science notes his observations; Plato represents the other attitude, the deep yearning after some firm foundation on which to build. The first influence that steadies the individual is the bond of obligation to his kin. The interests which branch out from the home-life gradually limit the individual's desire for change; he must move, if at all, in harmony with the other parts of the Society to which he is bound. But we have to remember that the Greeks were developing in the opposite way. For us a family is a group of individuals united by common interests and, to a great extent, in sympathy with each other. For the Greek, family life was a backwater; the main stream of life was political, not domestic; men lived in the open among their fellows, and only the women spent their days in the monotonous seclusion of the house. As compared with the life of the Agora, the house was a cloister; and the average Greek was not endowed with the qualities that make good monks. Here was the weak point in the life of the people; during the sixth and

following centuries the control of public affairs became more and more the work of experts; the people began to develop private interests and produced finally a thorough individualism. By that time a new era had begun; for the present we are concerned with the period of transition, and require to grasp as definitely as possible what sort of life the Greek lived in his own home.

The life of the farmer, in the days when scientific farming was not known, afforded plenty of scope for the exercise of a woman's special gifts. So we find in the early agricultural state a recognition of women which is not so much a definite valuation of them as a mere absence of doubt as to their value. But city life introduces new conditions. The home becomes more directly a woman's care; the man's work lies away from his home among other men; husband and wife are liable to agree that each is a hindrance to the other in their daily occupations. The wife in the house is but slightly distinct from the slaves; she may be honoured or even loved, but she is none the less a thing apart, at best a cherished possession but not an equal. When Aristotle discusses the authority of the head of the household, he distinguishes a husband's authority from that of the master of slaves; but the significant point is the fact that authority is discussed at all, for authority is not considered when Aristotle treats of friendship. The Greek point of view was more akin to the Eastern ideas than to European views to-day. Unless the women were educated and attained independent personal status, there was no

cure for such a state of affairs. In time that seems to have been partly achieved. In the days of Pericles Aspasia is renowned for her ability to be a companion of men; she seems to have been so much of an exception to the rule that she was hardly considered respectable; but she was a pioneer, and in the days of Aristophanes the "new woman" was so far an emancipated person that it was worth while writing a satire on "Women in Parliament." This process of change affected the whole community: in fact it was a result of political changes, leading to more general retirement from public affairs and a greater development of private life. As the Greek ceased to be political he became domestic; at the end of the fourth century he devoted himself to his home and his family with the pettifogging zeal of the retired official, and the comedies are full of men whose lives are controlled by the schemes of women, the tricks of slaves, and the waywardness of spoilt children.

Things might have been worse, and doubtless would have been but for the religious motives which long continued to control marriage. The Greeks, again, like the Orientals in this, believed that future happiness depended on the performance of due rites by the descendants. Children were therefore a necessity, and that necessity involved marriage and household cares: to it was due in large measure the purity of home-life which characterised the Greek, since the importance attached to unmixed descent had the effect of strictly regulating the union of the parents. But there was little or nothing in such religious tenets to

control directly the conduct of men, and as a rule there seems to have been no insistence upon chastity as a virtue. Apart from the social and religious questions connected with the registration of children as citizens, for which the legitimate marriage of the parents was required, there was no strong sentiment against vice. There was also no sentiment against the desfruction of children whom the parents did not wish to rear ; though the custom of exposing children had its defenders, it is hardly necessary to quote their excuses ; as the political changes mentioned above went on, there was silent but sure abandonment of the practice.

§ 3. The modern reader notices at once the coldness of this atmosphere. The very word "home" is for him suffused with warmth and affection ; he looks at the picture of Greek life, and asks where is the centre of their emotional life ? The answer is that it was found in friendship.<sup>1</sup> The term requires some explanation. To modern ears, friendship is a term of less significance than love. Not so with the Greeks. Their ideals were based on the notions of a military age, when comradeship in arms was the highest conception of personal relationship. Their thoughts tended therefore towards a chivalry as noble as mediæval Knight-errantry, but devoid of its romance. The friend was one who shared the joys and dangers of your life, marched to battle at your side ; he was lovely in his life, and in death he was not divided from you. In such ideals women played no part ; they belonged to the sphere which was then regarded

<sup>1</sup> See also p. 103.



as merely effeminate, and a preference for their company was looked upon as mawkish. To the end of the classical Greek period, friendship was the only recognised field of emotion; it declined in practice from a lofty union of interest in life down to a weak sentimentality; it was elaborately discussed by Aristotle in a way that shows how the term degenerated until it could cover the relation of a flatterer to his patron; finally, with the increased importance of domestic life, it became an ideal only among those who shirked the more responsible bonds of family life, including then both men and women.

Many of the topics which call for notice can be more successfully treated in direct connection with the writings of Plato and Aristotle. In the theories of those writers we shall see at once a reflection and an idealisation of common practices and opinion; at present we can only note a few points which are characteristic of the Greek view of life, and serve to define more clearly its relation to modern thought. In the first place, Greek morality was essentially a national code of honour. As such it involved the kind of obligation which binds any voluntary member of a group or society. It is frequently said that the Greeks lacked a sense of obligation. If obligation is taken in the purely religious sense of duty to God, that is, roughly speaking, true; but the Greeks knew quite well what the word "ought" usually denotes. The peculiarity of the Greek standpoint arises from their insistence on reason: what a man "ought" to do is always that which it is reasonable to do. The reasonable is also the natural: and so we come to the ideal

of rational conduct, a well-balanced use of opportunities and a complete development of all the natural powers. This ideal, in the best days, was modified by the tacit admission that the State takes precedence over the individual. To die for the State was the noblest act possible to man: such an act represented the most perfect self-control, for fear was overcome and the object of life kept steadily in view even in the terrors of death. In a similar way, to die for a friend was the mark of a noble character. In these cases there is definite obligation and no room for exceptions or excuses. But what we notice especially in Greek morality is its adaptability. We admire the man of principle who is not given to fine distinctions; we allow the individual to change his principles only when reason has clearly produced some general change of opinion. The Greek was more ready to allow the individual to use his own judgment. This is very obvious in the case of another virtue—self-sacrifice. Here again Greek and Christian views diverge so far that the Greeks are commonly said to have had no idea of self-sacrifice. The statement must be modified. The Greek always held that one must give up everything—even life itself—for an adequate reason. It is a mere quibble to say that such sacrifice is not genuine sacrifice, but only self-realisation. Whether we look to theory or to concrete cases (as that of Antigone), it is clear that the Greek recognised the importance of giving up what was in itself desirable for the sake of higher and essentially spiritual goods. Where the Greek differed from modern, that is Christian, ideas, was in the cool calculation of the cases which demand

sacrifice. For that which is high or noble sacrifice may be made, but there are few objects of such a kind. If a man dies for his equal he is justified; self-sacrifice for an inferior was hardly thought of, or regarded as a waste. The nature of the Greek view is therefore dependent solely upon their ideas of inferiority. As the warrior or the ruler is most important in the State, while women, children, slaves, and animals, are in their degrees less important, it did not seem to the Greek right or proper to give away life or opportunities for any of them. The value of human life was not estimated in those days as it is now: our ideal extols the man who gives away his chance of safety that the women and children may be rescued; but as in modern times the crew would be taken off the sinking ship, while the animals were abandoned to their fate, so the Greek would have aimed to save the best and have left the slaves, the children, and even the women to shift for themselves.

§ 4. This leads us to another point which is of particular interest, because some writers in the nineteenth century have presented the Greek ideal as still the right one. The fundamental question is, What type of individual do we desire to produce? The answer is contained in any catalogue of virtues. If the ideal man is to be marked distinctly by faith, hope, and charity; if among these charity, meaning consideration and benevolence toward all, is to be the greatest: then we may be said to aim at producing individuals who act primarily under the impulse of love toward mankind. The opposite ideal is that of efficiency, meaning by that success at the expense of

others. The Greek definitely preferred to produce highly efficient individuals; love and pity were not cardinal virtues for him; to love was to value another as part of one's self, and to pity was to despise; disease of body or weakness of mind was to be avoided in one's self, and shunned in others; the sickly child was put away, and the old were honoured or respected only when age was adorned with mature counsels and valuable wisdom. Here we touch upon a problem which is present in all ages, but most of all in times of danger. Are we to sacrifice other interests to sentiment? There is no need to ask whether the aged should be put to death: if the Greeks did not avoid that conclusion, if some among them resorted to suicide, if in modern times there have been advocates of that course—still, the question is not open to discussion: sentiment and not logic decides such points. But we can and do inflict wounds little less than mortal: in the essential points to dismiss the aged from office, or disregard them as counsellors, is to teach them that they are superfluous; and that is to many a living death. This treatment of the aged we mitigate by sentiment: the Greeks lacked sentiment, so that the clearness of their insight into facts and the absence of any attempt at concealment make their views on the point seem brutal. Probably the habit of treating worn-out slaves as animals no longer fit for work, broke down for the Greek those barriers between man and the animal, which to-day prevent us from thinking of men as creatures to be treated in such ways.

It is time now to try and arrive at some estimate of the morality we have sketched. Speaking very

generally, we may say that the period of the Persian Wars reflects the *morality* of an earlier period: the upper classes are a nobility with noble manners; their men accustomed to the ideals of warriors, loyal to their chiefs and comrades, and firmly convinced that friends and enemies should be treated quite differently; their ladies are honoured of the lower classes and rule over many servants, so that they also acquire some loftiness of bearing and consciousness of importance; beneath them and well separated from them are the common people. The Age of Pericles shows us this state of affairs somewhat changed by the new character of national life. There is more urbanity in the strict sense—more of town manners, more attention to politics, art, and literature. The politician being more important than the general, and every free citizen having a share in politics, more attention is paid to ability than birth, to shrewd counsels or even to persuasiveness than to high moral character or the power of controlling man. This age is marked by signal acts of cruelty, such as the ruthless slaughter of captives; for versatility and display are more developed than humanity. Here began the appearance of the smart man whom the philosophers hated and the people dreaded, the clever man whose abilities seemed to be devoid of moral control and to be justified by the temporary success which they achieved. Lastly, political life ceases to be so keen and interesting: the democracy finally removes the distinction of birth, proclaims equality of all citizens (though not of all men), and produces new conditions. The main features of this period, the last before Alexander's conquest of Greece, are common

to all similar stages of development in other countries. The warrior's ideals are gone, good and bad alike : a greater humanity is on the whole prevalent and commercial interests are more prominent. At the same time there is a more materialistic spirit ; private wealth is amassed, the public good is less considered, the struggle between states is less obvious than the struggle between individuals ; jealousy and greed become rampant ; there is an unhealthy tendency to be continually engaged in law suits ; men marry for money, women adopt the artificial attractions of paint and rouge ; the loss of greater interests is compensated by speculation in trade, gambling, horse-racing, cock-fighting, and a morbid taste for shows and for the parade of domestic affairs on the stage. These seem to be the characteristics of all ages in which, after a period of struggle, a nation becomes self-centred. It appears as an age of corrupt morals ; but we are perhaps too ready to apply that term. An age of great wars is strenuous but not ideal ; it commits its murders on a great scale, gives scope to evil tendencies in directions where the vice is concealed by the circumstances, and diverts interest from the mass of toiling honest people who suffer and are silent. Peace and plenty shift the centre of interest : the middle class and its virtues eclipse the nobility but are uniformly dull ; we begin to hear more of isolated cases of murder or adultery or embezzlement ; vice loses its glamour and the age is marked by the historian as degenerate and corrupt. Greece exhibits this development and has been too hastily described as slowly declining into corruption. If we try to name the permanent feature

of Greek life we are compelled to say that at all times the Greeks maintained a high sense of beauty. The beautiful was their ideal; not the true, nor the good, but the beautiful; and it was an ideal of great value. As an ideal the beautiful leads men to appreciate the human body and human faculties. The Greek never degenerated to mutilation of the body as a moral discipline; he never despised great attainments, as mere pride of intellect; he never turned away from nature and art; he never inflicted torture on others for pleasure, or hankered after public executions, gladiatorial displays, and bull-fights; he felt the shame of even desiring to look at the corpse of the criminal left unburied. In these and similar ways we see what a living reality in Greece was this sense of æsthetic beauty; civilisation owes to Greece a debt never wholly repaid for this object lesson in form, in those finer feelings which after centuries of false asceticism, morbid opposition to nature, the Inquisition, or the ghastly exhibitions of Newgate, are again beginning to control the life of nations. Against these excellences we must in fairness repeat the obvious deficiencies. For the contribution of Christianity to the world's ideals is exactly the addition of the good to the beautiful. Love of the beautiful is love of æsthetic satisfaction and inevitably involves narrowness of sympathy. As we remarked above, only the mature really appealed to the Greek: the diseased and the aged were disliked and despised. Close to this love of the beautiful lies love of comfort and of dexterity. Greek morality was too often like the undeveloped sentiment of the schoolboy who admires the clever

trick without thought of the suffering it involves; dexterity in action or in speech never failed to arouse admiration, and the last classical exponent of Greek morality admits that a lie is not really bad so long as it is a weapon consciously and purposively used. However much we see that in modern times men have the sentiments openly confessed by the Greeks; however much we admit that adulteration of foods, misleading advertisements, and the preaching of doctrines no longer believed, are universal evils; however much we argue that what is a lie between men is between statesmen diplomacy, we still do not admit that these things have any justification beyond the feeble excuse of expediency.

## APPENDIX

For the social aspect of Greek life see Mahaffy, *Social Life in Greece*; also, G. L. Dickinson, *Greek View of Life*. The central topics must be studied in the Greek writers, especially the poets, Plato, Aristotle. The teaching of the poets is well presented in Adam, *Religious Teachers of Greece*; a useful account is to be found in *Makers of Hellas*, by E. E. G. Of other Greek writers, the most important are Thucydides (especially the *Speech of Pericles* in bk. ii. and the description in bk. iii. 83); and Xenophon, *Economicus*.



## CHAPTER IV

### PLATO

§ 1. AT the close of the fifth century B.C. there were obvious signs that the civilisation of Greece had passed its prime. During the years from the death of Socrates (399 B.C.) to the death of Alexander (323 B.C.) there was restless ferment among the Greek states, a political fever that ended in political death. The age of creation had passed away and given place to an age of reflection; the cycle of growth and decay was in its last phase. To this period belong two of the world's greatest speculative thinkers, Plato and Aristotle; and the importance of their work makes it necessary to consider their views in detail.

Plato is best known for his dialogue *On the Republic* or *On Justice*, and in many ways that is his most characteristic work. But to obtain a complete view of his theory we must include at least that later and maturer work, the *Laws*. Plato's chief theories are well known; his communism has been praised and blamed by every succeeding generation; his schemes have been at different times extravagantly admired or dismissed as futile dreaming; in short, Platonic politics have suffered almost as many changes of

fortune as the ill-fated "*platonic love*." The historical setting of the theories has been most overlooked, and without some knowledge of that setting the text is read in vain. For Plato is reactionary rather than revolutionary. The revolutionary part of Greek political thinking was done by the Sophists; they were the accepted masters of advanced thought, and to them was due the formal statement of the principles which really actuated the democracy. The process of development which ended in the production of the last and most extreme form of democracy had also produced a new type of citizen; the Athenian had adopted what is now called individualism and almost unconsciously reduced the ancient State or Community to a mere aggregate of disconnected persons. The Sophist expounded the theory implied in the political outlook, and taught men not only to be individualistic, but to defend their individualism as the truest and best kind of life. The Sophists were not wholly wrong; but their liberalism was extreme and Plato was intensely conservative. To Plato there seemed to be only one way of salvation for Athens, the way by which the unity and solidarity of the community might be restored against this new individualism. From this belief arises his view of the origin of the State and of its proper organisation.

First as to the origin of the State. Plato formulates clearly the three theories which have at different times controlled political speculation and been adopted, usually to serve some preconceived purpose. There is no historical record of the actual way in which human societies began; so theories must be in all

cases broad hypotheses, more like logical analyses than historical records. The first and most superficial theory is that of force; the State arose through the strong subduing the weak and laying down laws for their own advantage. This theory, implying that justice is the interest of the ruler, seems suited to cases of conquest, but it overlooks the fact that at the worst a successful ruler must for his own sake govern well, that is to say, consider the interests of the ruled. The second theory is a variation of this, namely, that men were at first disunited, but afterwards united to defend themselves against wild beasts, and so began to live in cities and develop political life. This theory has the great fault of making political union the result of external conditions which would not necessarily lead further, though it too has an element of truth. What we most of all require to explain is not the first step towards unity but the essential principle which maintains unity. Perhaps, after all, there never was a period of absolute disunity; and, if there was, the historical act of unification is not what the philosopher cares about. As Plato saw, the essence of common life is the fact that individuals have need of one another, and can only achieve the end of their desires by co-operation. So the theory to which Plato gives his approval is that of the economic origin of society: men have at all times co-operated, they have attempted some kind of division of labour, and the essence of a State is to be understood as the unity of different interests and capabilities, in brief, a co-operative unity. This description of the genesis or logical origin of the State

serves to show that there is no radical opposition between the State and the individual: Plato is deeply convinced that the true State is a real community, a brotherhood. His communism is the further working out of this idea. It has been said that Plato's State is most like a monastic institution; in this there is some truth but an unnecessary violence of analogy; if for the later monastic institutions we substitute the Orphic brotherhoods which Plato actually knew, it will be clear where Plato learned the ideal afterwards typical of Christian institutions, the ideal of having all things in common.<sup>1</sup>

Plato, we have said, was reactionary rather than revolutionary. Modern theorists recognise that in primitive societies the community took precedence over the individual; in all primitive societies men and women divide the day's work with no regard for anything but the obvious principles of division of labour. To this primitive simplicity Plato desires to return. Doubtless the Pythagorean brotherhoods suggested to his mind the possibility of such a return; it seemed as though the evils of society were due to the ingenuity of man, and could be cured only by a return to primitive conditions. Needless to say, there was no power that could effect that return; the Platonic ideal was not to be effected by force or by returning, but to some extent it has been realised outside of Greece by time and by progress.

§ 2. We must turn now to the elements of the State. The first and most important is the individual person. In spite of the way in which apparently the community

<sup>1</sup> For later communism, *s. pp.* 226, 228.

overrides the individual, Plato never forgets that the State is a unity of individuals, a whole consisting of parts; and while there are two points of view, that of the community and that of the individual, these are aspects but not divisions of the State. Every individual is a living unit in the whole, just as every part is a living unit in the body. Politics must begin, therefore, with the individual, shaping and moulding every part to make the perfect whole. The ruler looks first to character, and by control of education employs the right means for producing the required type of citizens. Education is the basis, for it affects the young: from it will be derived character and the tone of the community; it will determine the morality of the citizens and settle, in advance, half the problems of legislation. In this sense Plato teaches the fundamental unity of ethics and politics; he admits no distinction of private from public morality; he is free from the perplexing questions which arise from religious dissensions and opposing creeds, and has to consider only the Good as something which may be shared by all enlightened members of society.

Greek ethical systems are intellectual in character; that is to say, the end of life is not to obey the will of God, or fulfil a law given as a divine command, but to subject all action to reason. The fundamental terms are order and disorder, *cosmos* and *chaos*. The Good, whether in the Universe, or the State, or man, is a condition of order produced by obedience to law. The action of law or of the ruler may be thwarted; in nature there is an element of chance, and in man there are passions; in both there is also a right rule

whose preservation constitutes the ideal life. In the sphere of Ethics the ideal may be briefly stated. Every human being has some degree of reason, and so long as reason prevails, the individual will attain his highest good. The term "reason" is used in a double sense; it may denote the mere power of understanding and adopting rules, or it may denote a higher state of development in which the person not only understands the rule as an existing fact, but also grasps its ultimate significance, the reason why there should be rules at all. Thus the ordinary man may take exercise, knowing that it is good for him, but not knowing how it actually affects his system; or the conscientious man may pay his debts, because he desires to avoid penalties, or to be respectable, never advancing to any deeper grasp of that necessity of fulfilling contracts which really constitutes the obligation to pay one's debts. So, while all men have reason, they have it in different degrees, and on this basis they can be classified and different degrees of virtue expected from them. In the lowest class Plato puts the producers, artisans and workers, whose life is properly lived if they preserve the rules which exist in their community. Their characteristic virtue is temperance, a sober observance of the rules laid down for them. In a different class, though not actually higher, come the soldiers, from whom we expect primarily courage. Above these are the rulers, whose virtue is wisdom. These distinctions are not absolute; there is a sense in which each class has all the virtues, but Plato believes strongly in the division of labour: if some are to be rulers, others must be subservient to rule, and the only result of

changing those relations will be anarchy. To the three virtues already named, wisdom, courage, and temperance, Plato adds a fourth called Justice. This is essentially the virtue that preserves the right relations between the three divisions of the State. We have already seen (p. 42) the general idea of Justice current in the Greek world. Plato gives us the classic exposition of the idea, but as we shall have to discuss this virtue again in detail (p. 93), it may be left for the present.

The same principles apply to the individual as to the State. In the case of the individual, there is a natural relation between the desires and reason. Reason is ruler in its own right; desires by their nature require to be ruled; and therefore the ideal life for the individual is a system of impulses regulated by reason. Desire is the sphere of natural impulses; reason is the power of comprehending rules; and spirit is the tendency, partly rational, partly irrational, to maintain one's principles against all temptations. As in the State the harmonious union of all the parts is the essence of justice, so in the individual the virtue of justice is realised when the right relations are kept, when reason is ruler, spirit its ally, and desire its subject. To understand what is meant by the rule of reason we must go back and consider the position of Socrates.

§ 3. Socrates lived at a time when the old dogmas were being criticised, and there was a general feeling that all morality and all civil law was a matter of local, or at least temporary, arrangement. Such views implied a shallow understanding of the real facts of life.

There arose at that time a distinction between natural and conventional principles. Fire, men said, burns everywhere alike, and that is both natural and universal. But moral laws or rules of conduct differ in different places; they have no universality, no necessity, and are therefore not natural laws, but conventional arrangements. Now it may be true that custom differs in different lands; but it does not follow that all morality is a delusion which clever men detect and ignore. There must be *some* principles which are ultimate and natural to mankind. Reason will show these if reason is properly used. And so, avoiding all direct statement of principles as dogmatic rules, Socrates tried to show men that they did not rightly use their reason, and how they might do so. The intended result was to make each person reason out his own plan of life, and Socrates doubtless believed that the result would be for each a discovery of truths that were universal and valid for all. The great vice of the average man is inconsistency; the individual who would not steal from his neighbours often sees no sin in avoiding payment of his taxes or in handing on a bad coin. But if he stops to think he annihilates the differences which make his excuse; he can no longer say "that is a different thing," for he sees that in principle there is no difference. In this lay the greatness of Socrates: he forced the individual to come down to ultimate principles, and so to acknowledge that his inconsistencies were irrational. Virtue, said Socrates, is knowledge, vice is ignorance. This was the epitome of Greek ethics. Every man of necessity desires his own good, which must be really



a universal good. But ignorance blinds men to this good ; as they eat what harms them without intending to incur disease, so they do evil because they cannot see that their action deprives them of the good they really desire.

This doctrine strongly influences Plato, and accounts for what is usually called the intellectualism of Plato's theory of life. To act rightly a man must have clear and adequate knowledge of all things concerned with his action. The ideal life is only achieved by the expert, and the ideal State can only be found where government is in the hands of experts. Every department of life is the subject of a science and can only be managed successfully by those who have attained the science.

Plato's attitude in the *Republic* has often been the object of ridicule ; the ideal State and its philosopher-king have too often been regarded as a fantastic dream. Without attempting any elaborate discussion we may suggest a few points to be considered. So far as the philosopher-king is concerned, Plato makes no attempt to depict a ruler of men ; he understood quite well the qualities which make a man's influence powerful over others ; but he was not concerned to draw a picture of a vivid personality, he was dealing with the type of man who may not be successful, but is none the less right. And this was not an error on Plato's part ; his ruler is not a forceful or intrusive personality, because he has no need for such qualities ; assuming that education has been properly conducted, the people apply to the ruler for his directions. Plato has in his mind the analogy of the doctor ; the specialist is

honoured by all men, and patients travel long distances to obtain his decisions. Why should a ruler, if he is truly a specialist, not receive the same respect and honour? The difference between the scientific specialist and the noisy demagogue is only too obvious; but then the reason is that such rulers are really making a business of government, they are retail traders in what they call justice. Plato entirely changes the usual position, yet the ideal, if it is paradoxical, is none the less a true ideal. But everything depends on the system of education, on the way the citizens are developed. \*Plato's political theory is eminently sound in this respect; from first to last he is clear that all law gets its force from the character of the people who acknowledge the law. We might say that Plato excels in the social aspect of his work. The nature of the City-State made it easy to treat government as a social matter; and that is why we find Platonic principles reviving in the nineteenth century when, after centuries of division and strife between ruler and ruled, the idea of a nation as really a society once more became effective. On the other hand, the scheme of the *Republic* is certainly too ideal for immediate realisation. Granted that you cannot make a clean sweep of existing conditions and start with a new generation educated to the required level, then of course the ideal ruler vanishes along with the ideal subjects. Plato saw this, and his work on the *Laws* is a secondary scheme drawn up when he was conscious that his earlier ambitions were not to be achieved. Here we have a mass of practical detail which we cannot attempt to describe.

## APPENDIX

## (a) CHRONOLOGY—

B.C. 429	.	.	Death of Pericles.
			Peloponnesian War (431-404).
428	.	.	Birth of Plato.
425-421	.	.	Aristophanes, chief plays.
411	.	.	Rule of the Four Hundred at Athens.
410	.	.	Restoration of democracy.
404	.	.	Surrender of Athens; downfall of Athenian Empire.
399	.	.	Death of Socrates.
387	.	.	Conjectural date of Plato's visit to Syracuse.
387-368	.	.	(?) Plato at Athens. [Aristotle his pupil.]
368	.	.	(?) Second visit to Sicily.
361	.	.	(?) Third visit to Sicily.
347	.	.	Death of Plato.

(b) General view in Pater, *Plato and Platonism*. Ethical doctrine in Sidgwick, *History of Ethics*. Political and ethical theories very fully stated in *Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle*, E. Barker.

(c) It is not possible to represent Plato by brief quotations. The text assumes that the *Republic* is available for study; but the following passages should also be studied: (1) *Protagoras*, 320 ff., to supplement the account in *Republic*, II.; (2) *Laws*, III. 676, where a "historical" account of the origin of the State is given. Here the first condition is pastoral; then comes agriculture, the tribe, patriarchal rule; finally, the Polis. The *Laws* show a very mature estimate of social life; the following points illustrate this phase:—

*Laws*, 716: "Now God ought to be to us the measure of all things, and not man . . . and he who would be dear to God must, as far as is possible, be like Him and such as He is . . . the temperate man is the friend of God." From this Plato deduces (a) that service and prayers are acceptable to God from the good; sacrifice from the bad is not

acceptable. After God men should honour their parents with their property, their persons, and their souls, "in return for the endless care and travail which they bestowed upon them of old, in the days of infancy."

*Laws*, 728: Next to God in honour is the soul, then the body: there is a natural honour of the body: riches should not be heaped up for one's children: "let parents bequeath to their children not a heap of riches but the spirit of reverence." Strangers and suppliants must be respected.

*Laws*, 730: The excessive love of self is in reality the source to each man of all offences: he who would be a great man ought to regard not himself or his interests, but what is just.

These lofty sentiments are rooted in Plato's religious views. That aspect is clearly shown in *Laws*, 661: "to live at all without justice and virtue, even though a man be rich in all the so-called goods of fortune, is the greatest of evils, if life be immortal; but not so great, if the bad man lives only a very short time." The hypothesis of immortality and a judgment after death controls all Plato's ethical doctrine.

In the *Laws* (as in the *Gorgias*) Plato teaches that the end and object of punishment is reformation of the offender. This, and his view on respect for strangers, are above the usual level of Greek thought.

One more point is very significant of this epoch in Greek thought. In the *Laws*, 918, Plato faces the question, Why is retail trade despised? Its objects, he says, are good, but its methods are bad and it drifts into the hands of people who set no limits to their desire for gain; if it were possible to make the best people carry on retail trade we should know how good a thing it is; if trade was managed on incorrupt principles such occupations would be honoured.

Two topics of essentially modern character are discussed by Plato. The first, improvement of the race, is now called Eugenics; both in the *Republic* and the *Laws* Plato insists on the necessity of regulating marriage in the

interests of the offspring, but in the *Laws* he lays more stress on self-regulation and heredity; drunkenness and all vice have their effects on the children of loose-living parents. The second topic, Education, is also discussed in both the *Republic* and the *Laws*. The paradoxical statement of *Republic*, vii. (541), is often misunderstood: in desiring to remove the children from the parents Plato is anticipating modern school methods; the ancient method of household education has actually given place to expert teaching in institutions for the purpose. Thus the child is now given an opportunity of acquiring knowledge beyond the attainments of the parents; the clever child of poor and ignorant parents is no longer limited to the environment in which he is born; the State supersedes the parent in this respect. Plato, studied with a knowledge of his times, appears to have fully appreciated (a) the disadvantages of leaving children to be taught by the women of the house or by slaves and idle tutors; and (b) the valuable part of the Sophistic movement toward expert professional teaching.

## CHAPTER V

### ARISTOTLE

§ 1. THE philosophy of Greece culminated in the work of Aristotle. In the last years of Greek national life and the earliest days of Greek subserviency to Macedonia, Aristotle was uniting, in a last synthesis, the thoughts of Greece. Between Aristotle and Plato there is no gulf: the master lived to see his earliest ambitions prove futile, and to write in the *Laws* a scheme of politics more practicable; the pupil speaks the language of Plato's latest writings. One difference will be found to affect Aristotle. His life coincides with the developed individualism of Greece, and wherever he modifies the Platonic standpoint we trace the influence of a time when individualism was already established and the idea of unity in Plato's sense was obsolete. Aristotle emphasises distinctions which Plato desired to blur: even the form of his work shows this tendency; in place of comprehensive dialogues we have definite treatises on logic, metaphysics, ethics, and politics. So we can begin with one department and consider the *Ethics* first.

Aristotle's work on *Ethics* is primarily descriptive. The individual is still regarded as essentially part of a

State, and statecraft is the supreme science. But the power which we have over anything is measured by our knowledge of the way in which it works. If men are to be successfully ruled they must first be understood; in other words, we must know the forces which lead them to act, we must get at their motives, we must have some insight into the man's soul. So Aristotle begins really with psychology. He assumes that we shall admit certain doctrines established by Socrates; namely, that there is a Good which is the object of desire, that all men aim at what they think is the Good, and only miss the mark through some defect of nature; that, finally, the secret of success in life is knowledge or at least right reason. Accepting these traditional ideas, Aristotle proceeds to analyse conduct and discover the springs of action. The result is a statement of the facts of the moral life which seems to lose no value either from the lapse of time or the change of ages.

For the practical man, in this case the lawgiver, a general sketch is enough. So we begin, as did Plato, with the simple division of the soul into rational and irrational powers, only stopping to remark that "irrational" is a wide term and must be taken here to mean emotions and desires, not the mere processes of nutrition. What is required for our purpose is what appears to be in the mind of man when he acts: anger, fear, lust, and all such distracting states of the soul on the one hand, and, on the other, reason. For our starting-point is the fact that the average man experiences the moral struggle, and therefore clearly has in him discordant impulses, or it may be better to

say that there is discord between his reason and his impulses. Anyhow, it is clear that the right is the reasonable, and to do right morally means to do what reason tell us to do. Then what is that? Aristotle's answer to that question shows, more than anything else, the strength of his grasp on real life. He lays down no fixed ideal and draws up no list of "cardinal" virtues; rightness in conduct lies in the character of the action. There are as many ways of being right as there are occasions for choice; yet the right is always right, and (true to Socratic principles) we must define it as it is *always* or essentially. So Aristotle tells us that virtue is a mean, the course which lies between extremes. On every occasion when we exercise choice we select a line of action from which it is possible to swerve one way or another; we may eat too much or eat too little, we may shrink in cowardice from opportunities for heroism or rush foolishly into needless dangers; in every case there is the possibility of doing too much or too little. In actual practice, morality reduces itself to a question of pleasures and pains; men err through excessive love of pleasure or excessive shrinking from pain: they go in any case *too much* in one direction, and Aristotle's "golden mean" is really the old Greek motto, "Nothing too much," stated again in its full significance.

When we have defined Virtue as a mean it is easy to say who is the good man. He must be one whose actions are thus nicely calculated, whose conduct is an exhibition of right principles, who leads a life of reason unclouded by passion. Really, then, Knowledge is the best thing in life, and the highest good of



man is to live for ever in a region devoid of passions and in the exercise of an undisturbed reason. But if Aristotle confesses to this ideal, he shows clearly that he appreciates the position of the ordinary man. He does not say that the thinker is the only good person; he does not even maintain that to be good one must understand the last and deepest principles of one's conduct. There is a place reserved by Aristotle for the man whose morality consists in quietly keeping those rules of life which his fathers revered or his superiors ordain. And, looking in another direction, Aristotle does not press the ideal of conduct beyond the limits of ordinary sentiment; he does not favour any separation of man from the world; poverty, he knows, is cramping, even when it does not directly induce vice; wealth may breed vice, but that is not the fault of one's wealth so much as of one's character, which wealth neither makes nor mars. Life is like a play; even the best actor needs a fitting stage and suitable equipment; and for the perfect life man needs adequate income, friends, relatives, and children.

§ 2. Across this theory of conduct is written in plainest letters the word "individualism." We must stop to consider the significance of that fact. In the first place Aristotle is paying unusual attention to the ordinary man, the man who is in business by day, at home with his wife and family in the evening, the man whom the ruler protects indirectly in all his doings, or whom the law-officer arrests for theft, murder, or drunkenness. The life of such a man is somewhat drab; he is not a saint or a genius at the

best, and yet he is decidedly neither a criminal nor a fool. Hasty idealists call him materialistic ; but he is really a normal human being, desiring for himself and for others what his age calls its standard of comfort. Knowing and appreciating the average man, Aristotle gives him his due ; he had indeed become more obvious in the days when the aristocrats were no longer of great importance because Greece had a monarch, when trade was steadily developing, and when democracy had left upon the streets and in the houses of Athens men of keen sense who were no longer able to control affairs of State. If the tone of this morality seems pitched lower than before, it is at any rate a doctrine of wider application, and its foundation is in the right stratum of humanity. As we shall see later, it is the middle-class that Aristotle considers most, and middle class virtue is just what might be expected—middle class.

This new outlook, different from the earlier aristocratic point of view, accounts for certain details in Aristotle which are of great interest. First, we notice that much stress is laid on opinion. In addition to the knowledge of the expert there is a kind of knowledge which comes from mere acquaintance with ordinary events. The people do somehow get a point of view which is at least partly right. In practical matters particularly there is much to be gained by considering what ideas are actually prevalent. For everyone has problems of his own to solve, and morality is to a large extent the solution of the problems which common experience raises. The theorist may be right as to ideals or

superior in his logic to the average man; but the complexity of human affairs is what makes it impossible to start from one dogma and deduce others. As a matter of method we must (as Socrates saw) aim to disentangle universal laws and set them out clearly; but we must make sure that the facts have been impartially observed, we must be inductive rather than deductive, and the best start we can make is from those generalisations which we always find that people, with no pretence to be experts, make for themselves. In adopting this standpoint Aristotle rightly estimates how far the individual should be considered; we are not to ignore him, and we are not to accept his standards and beliefs as final.

An appreciation of the ordinary man makes the observer more anxious to explain all forms of conduct. Aristotle does not take good men as a whole to the exclusion of the bad, but shows a keen interest in humanity as such, in the criminal therefore, no less than the respectable citizen. His remarkable contributions to the subject of criminal psychology and of responsibility in crime have been too much overlooked, largely because it is only in recent years that we have begun to take an interest in such questions ourselves, and given up confining our attention to the eminently respectable. Aristotle was a man to whom religious enthusiasm made but little appeal; the idea of the sinner as hateful to some gods or as urged on to crime by other gods, was for him and his school as antiquated as the armour of Homeric warriors: for all such mythical aspects of conduct Aristotle

substitutes a naturalistic treatment. Coming to close quarters with the actual problems, Aristotle first defines crime as an act of will which is judged worthy of punishment. Good and bad are terms which in practice denote those qualities which we praise or blame in a man. We must keep in mind that actions and qualities are not always the same; a result may be undesirable, and may even be the cause of great sorrow to the person concerned, as in all cases of pure accident; so that we must be careful not to condemn the man in all cases but look for some further distinction of agent and action. Aristotle finds that distinction in the difference between actions that are preceded by deliberate choice, and those actions which are due to circumstances over which one has no control. This, however, seems to settle very little; the one thing we want to know is what are the circumstances over which one has no control? If a man commits a murder when he is drunk, does his drunkenness excuse the murder? If a homicidal tendency is a notorious feature of a man's family, will the plea of inherited dispositions procure him an acquittal? These and similar problems agitate our minds to-day and lend a new interest to Aristotle's careful work. The first step is to fix upon the central idea, and this is clearly responsibility. A crime is an action for which a man is rightly held responsible when he is the beginning of the action. Aristotle excuses the man who is a mere link in a series of events, as, *e.g.*, the man who kills another when aiming a blow intended to save him; but he will not excuse a man on the

ground of previous actions or hereditary tendencies, for these belong to the man himself. If the murderer pleads his drunkenness he incurs blame for both crimes ; if he argues that his vices are hereditary and incurable he only proves that his character is permanently undesirable and gives the ruler the best of all reasons for ridding society of his presence. We see here that Aristotle is not talking of free will as it was understood in later times, but merely deciding the limits of praise and blame in society, and of rewards and punishments in law. As a scientific inquirer he is keenly alive to the importance of heredity ; qualities are not perfected in a generation and good parentage is an inestimable advantage : but he does not believe that society is responsible to the criminal, he considers first the safety of the community, and argues that its right of self-preservation involves a right to punish even with death the offender against its rules. The legal and ethical points of view differ, and the legal tends to obscure the ethical ; we may admit that a man has had no advantages, and is by nature no better than an animal, yet in so far as that only proves him a permanent danger to the safety of others, the law rightly puts him out of the way. Some actions are bestial and seem to prove in themselves that a man is hardly human ; but Aristotle is clear that they are the very actions which we cannot forgive. Aristotle sees that there is no reason for punishing a man unless there is hope of reforming him through punishment. But he does not believe that reform is always possible ; from hereditary tendencies or from persistent evil-doing a man may

arrive at a condition which is incurable. In this point Aristotle was probably wrong. The resources of human nature are great, and as our knowledge of the human mind advances, we lose faith in the rough-and-ready conclusions of the practical lawgiver, growing more suspicious of any proceedings which overlook the vast field of data opened up by the study of the subconscious, of multiple personality, and of many other things not known to Aristotle.

§ 3. Yet in one respect Aristotle was far ahead of his times, and reached a point to which we are only slowly returning to-day. He had a very clear idea of development and of the gradual formation of character, so that his views are biological and genetic within certain limits. He has no doctrine of original sin or of divine election; his basis is the common Greek basis of nature, and he is concerned only with what seems to be nature's possibilities. Some are naturally better than others, for nature is not uniform in its production of men or animals or plants; there is a certain degree of natural endowment which, in Platonic language, is the gift of heaven, and such gifts are an inestimable advantage for art or learning or morality. Aristotle's idea of development is not to be classed as evolutionary in the modern sense; his outlook is limited, and his resources too meagre; yet his *attitude* is strikingly modern. Given, as fixed quantities, a man's connate tendencies, we may expect a continuous development for better or worse. As time goes on, the plasticity of early life is lost; the moral organism becomes rigid, and loses its power of change or adaptation; character becomes fixed,

and action will tend to establish it still more firmly. This view of the moral life as a natural growth, prevents Aristotle from shutting himself up too closely within the limits of human action. He would not sanction so absurd an idea as that of "animal morality," but he is fully aware that there are laws of behaviour among animals, and that these laws, not being commands but principles of action, are operative among animals as much as among men. Man is, for Aristotle, an animal in a double sense, both as an organism which works by laws common to all animal organisms, and as a creature whose loftiest spiritual flights never quite detach him from the emotions that animals seem to feel. Between the desperate courage of the last rally on the battlefield, and the fierce charge of the wounded animal, there is the greatest difference possible, and yet there is a similarity equally unmistakable. In those emotions of anger and lust, which are embedded in human nature, there is in our moral life a stratum of animal passions: civilisation means essentially the conversion of such "elemental passions" into feelings worthy of the citizen, emotions fit for and controlled by social intercourse. If we lose sight of their existence we become unjust to our fellows; Aristotle, keeping this in view, struck the right keynote; psychology, as he saw, is *non-moral*; its sphere is the explanation of those elements in our nature which lead to action; it must explain both good and bad action, and so furnish a common basis for our judgment of good and bad men.

We have seen how closely Aristotle's ethical theory

keeps in touch with nature, and how his view of man as a "creature made for city-life," in other words, an animal capable of civilisation, controls the development of his theory. The first requisite was a clear analysis of the nature of man looked upon as the raw material ; now, in order to study the finished product, we must consider the means which are used to civilise the human being. The first is education, and as Plato has worked out this means so fully, Aristotle does little more than restate his master's plan. The next and the greatest is the State itself. The State comprehends at once the environment in which the individual must develop and the object for which he lives ; as it was before him and will be after him, so it is the beginning and the end of his life ; it forms him before he knows it, gives him a field in which to realise himself, and judges his final worth. The way in which the city forms its own future citizens is the subject of education. If we consider the second point, the City as the theatre of action, we come to the question of Justice. This great virtue was so fully treated by the Greek writers, that it has been reserved for special consideration at this point.

§ 4. We have seen how justice was regarded by the Greeks as the principle of order in the universe. In the beginning there was chaos, and out of chaos there arose Cosmos, the reign of universal law. Plato adapted this idea to the State and to man, regarding each of these as microcosms or smaller systems within which the reign of law might have sway. Aristotle's exposition assumes this general principle, and starts with the Platonic idea of universal justice. But this



view of justice seems to make the term too vague, and too much like another name for virtue in general. So Aristotle passes over that lightly, and devotes himself primarily to justice in the narrower sense, the justice which he calls particular in opposition to that universal justice. But he does not lose sight of the more comprehensive idea, nor does he limit justice, as we usually do, to the action of the law courts. Litigation is, after all, a symptom; it is the sign that some more fundamental and abiding system of relations has been disturbed. So we must look first at justice as it is in its normal persistent state. The community is primarily designed for the maintenance of peaceful activities, such as the performance of ordinary duties and the exchange of goods. In the first place, then, justice is maintained when individuals do not interfere one with another, and there is a breach of justice in such cases as assault, where the law may be appealed to for restitution. In this case justice is said to be corrective, for the law appoints penalties to readjust the relations of the persons concerned. In addition to corrective justice, there is the species called directive justice. The State was for the Greeks a real partnership, and its members were, so to speak, shareholders in the community. So the good things were divided up among the members, as the spoils might be divided among the army after a victory. The adjustment of all the shares constitutes distributive justice, a form of justice very fully discussed by Aristotle, but not of great interest nowadays. The idea underlying this emerges in another form which will repay closer investigation. The writer of the

fifth book of the *Nicomachean Ethics* grasps the very valuable idea that trade is fundamentally a mode of distribution, a way in which everyone obtains his right share of the available "goods." The individual's claim for "goods" is represented by his money, which is the symbol of his value, because it represents his production. In the earlier stage the individual took his product to market, and business was an affair of barter. This cruder method of exchanging things for things was now obsolete; money had been introduced, but it was still possible to see clearly that money was the equivalent of a man's contribution to the common stock, and a kind of order upon the State to give him in return, on demand, a due equivalent for his contribution. The idea of money is here expressed very simply, but we find the principal ideas of a currency very well stated. The medium of exchange must be easily carried, divisible into parts, and relatively stable in value. There is also a clear grasp of the meaning of value; it is rightly said to be constituted by need or, as we say, demand; so that the price of the goods is expressed in the equivalent which a person is willing to give for them. But all this system would be impossible without security, and in this sphere justice is fundamentally the security which the State as such provides. From the economic point of view, then, it is clearly asserted that the first duty of the State is to provide freedom from fear, and so make possible the dealings of one man with another. This great principle of a latent justice, most effective when least noticed, silently making possible the whole complicated machinery

of business, was not more clearly conceived by Bentham than by his Greek predecessor. In this sphere, as in that of corrective justice, the underlying force is most apparent when there is a breach of right relations. It is then that the law court comes into action, and the "justice of the peace" is called upon to decide the dispute. But it would be well if we could remember more often that the action of the law is the least important part of the idea of justice. It would have been well if the Greek had remembered this, and there had not been that tendency, satirised by Plato, to make injustice the occupation of life, as those persons did who spent their time in litigation, and instead of being just devoted their talents to outdoing their judges and juries. Excessive litigation was rightly described by Plato as a social disease, for men only require the law to act when the spirit of justice is corrupted. Neither Plato nor Aristotle ever forgot that there was a higher degree of life than that which finds expression in legal claims and redresses. Above and beyond that virtue of justice which outwardly keeps the law, is the inner justice of the soul, Plato's idea of virtue in social relations. Aristotle recognises this by adding to justice the virtue of equity. Equity he describes as the state of mind which sets the spirit before the letter, and aims at conscientious fairness rather than the strict observance of obligations. The man who can sympathise with others is superior to the man who is narrowly righteous in his dealings, and the highest type of citizen is he who stands above the level of written laws. For laws are general statements that

never fit very accurately the varieties of human experience; they are dead formulæ, unless the spirit of them is quickened by the generosity of high purposes. Among the *growing litigiousness of the Greeks*, and the increase of petty quibblings, it is pleasant to feel that it was possible for a Greek, even in the close of the fourth century, to uphold this loftier idea of generous citizenship.

§5. Such being the Greek idea of Justice or the virtue of man in the community, we may go on to the final question, What is the nature of the State? Aristotle distinguishes clearly between the question of origin and the question of nature. The origin of a State is to be explained historically, and history seemed to Aristotle to show that the State arose out of a union of villages, which in their turn had arisen out of a union of families. The original nucleus then would be the family, and Aristotle might have followed Plato in regarding the State as an overgrown family. But this he did not do. A process of development may end in producing a new type: and that is the result in this case. A State is an association of individuals, but it is not a family, because the relations between citizens are not those which hold between members of a family. Later ideas about the brotherhood of man have tended to obscure this point. A family is organised through natural relations which depend upon the relative immaturity of some members: there is no reason why citizens should be regarded as varying in maturity; the ideal, if not the actual, State would be composed of equals, and in any case the problems of political life arise from the fact that the will, if not

the reason, is mature in all citizens. When the State has once come into being it is useless to make its history serve for a description of its nature; we must look elsewhere for our basis and we find it in natural sociability, that community of interest or inherent gregariousness which brings and holds together the creatures of one kind. Between chosen individuals this sentiment is friendship; between all men there is in some degree the same feeling of kinship.

It is a common interest that really makes the essence of the State; at its lower level this is an economic interest, but men get beyond that stage and finally achieve a common life which has unique value because it makes and sustains spiritual values. Here we reach the real answer to the question about the nature of the State. To the mind of Aristotle it is a union of rational persons, satisfying the material and spiritual needs of all, a place of liberty, equality, and high intellectual intercourse. To realise such an ideal could never be easy. Greece had already struggled for a long time to keep a just balance between the tyranny of the few over the many, and the no less terrible tyranny of the many over the few. To save liberty from becoming anarchy was one part of the problem; to prevent the ruler from being despotic was the other part. The crucial question was therefore the question of sovereignty, and the answer which Aristotle gave to this question shows how clearly he grasped the problem of government and how dependent political issues are on incalculable factors. The inspiring force of Greek politics in later centuries arose from its recognition of the sovereignty of the whole community.

In principle this is constantly asserted; it found practical expression in the position of the chief magistrate of the city, whose "sovereignty" was that of a president, a supremacy that implied no degradation in others. Athens realised above all others the meaning of equality in civic life; her last great political philosopher hardly regarded the empire of Alexander as worthy of consideration; to the last there never appeared any ideal that could compare with the image of perfection so briefly and faintly mirrored in Athens at her best. Men must of course be governed; but their laws may be laws of reason, not commands imposed by force; their ruler may be only the exponent of law, himself ultimately a servant of the law; but beneath the sway of law, as an inherent reasonableness in things, every reasonable being lives in free submission. The ideal lived on because it was an ideal of reason; but the day for such a millennium was already gone. The society which suggested the ideal could never be self-sufficient, and failed in the cities to be sufficiently expansive. Economic pressure led the State to become an Empire, and the bond of fellowship broke under the strain of expansion; greed, competition, alien elements in the population and the subordination of other interests to wealth, all combined to break up the City State and convert its concentrated energy into the broader stream of Hellenism.

Both the real value and the historical significance of Greek political theories depend upon the spirit which pervades them. Into the detailed discussion of constitutions we shall not attempt to enter, but Aristotle's ideas about the forms of government deserve

attention ; they were destined to be a source of inspiration to the earliest theorists in modern times. The reason for this is that the problem attacked by Aristotle is not fundamentally different from that which confronted the political theorists of the fourteenth century, the problem of limiting the excessive power of one or more elements in the State. In the later period it is a question of limiting the action of the few by giving power to the many ; in other words, the restoration of power to the people and the establishment of some control over the arbitrary power of a sovereign *de facto*. In Aristotle's time the threatening danger was the unlimited power of the people ; the citizens were inclined to degenerate into democracy. The ancient and the modern lines of advance thus differ and are diametrically opposed ; but in both the object of theory is to attain a rational basis for the realisation of a common good ; and when the idea of the commonwealth began to occupy the minds of men after the mediæval rulership, the Platonic and Aristotelian outlook immediately regained importance.

The idea of the constitution is made, by the Greeks, to depend on the idea of that good which it promotes. Plato and Aristotle differed as to the means by which the good was to be attained, but they agree in the fundamental point, namely, that it is a common good. A constitution designed to achieve a certain end may be formulated ideally or practically. It is one of the merits of Aristotle that he realises the impossibility of making a final and universal prescription ; the ideal is most truly ideal when it is adapted to actual conditions, and there are therefore, in a sense, many ideals.

Politics, as a science, reduces the various forms of government to certain types or classes ; for all sciences are compelled to deal with universal terms. Reason shows us that the highest form of political life is only attained when the different parts of the community co-operate to achieve their good ; in other words, when the rulers seek the good of the ruled, and the ruled attain their good through that rule, being subjects and not slaves. The question to be decided next is, Who are by nature fitted to rule ? In exceptional cases there is *one transcendent person*, a flawless embodiment of law, whose superiority marks him out as ruler ; but this is rarely or never the case, and in practice the idea of such superiority leads to arbitrary and tyrannical domination. Kingship therefore may be regarded as, usually, undesirable. As compared with Plato, Aristotle is more inclined to relax the strictness of the doctrine that politics is a science requiring experts ; he is prepared to see in the general reason of men a useful guide to truth in so complicated a subject. But equal attention is not to be paid to all ; one qualification for sound judgment on political matters is the person's status. Every citizen has " a stake in the country," but a man's outlook differs not only in respect of ability, but in respect of his actual point of view. Having admitted a certain general ability to comprehend political matters, we must make due allowance for interests, in Platonic language for " desires." Different classes have different interests ; it is *their nature* to aim at different objects. The principal classes are the rich, the middle class, and the poor. Usually the poor are numerous,



and therefore in practice we mean the poor when we talk of "the people." Democracy comes to mean, in actual use, the rule of the few rich by the many poor. This is not likely to be an equitable rule and must be regarded as a bad type. Similarly, the rich are inclined to be unjust, and lose sight of the common good, so that oligarchy too seems a bad type. We are left with a middle class, which has qualities that make for stability. If the middle class is taken as a centre-point, and the other classes so adjusted as to produce a system of mutual checks, we get a constitution in which the classes are mixed; this, Aristotle thinks, is the true practical ideal.

One or two remarks on this will be all that our space permits. Democracy, we see, is rejected. Aristotle is thinking of the whole number of citizens acting as one body; there is no idea of representation; if political measures are the work of this body politic, everything is at the mercy of mere numbers. Democracy, in this sense, is very different from the modern idea of a democratic constitution with a system of representation. On the other hand, the Polity, or mixed Constitution, has been aptly called a constitutional democracy. By proposing to establish within the body politic a system of relative values, by making the question of quantity subordinate in some degree to that of quality, Aristotle really preserves the democratic spirit and checks the tendency to mob-rule. In this way the scheme favoured by Aristotle retains two equally valuable principles, the rights of the citizens and the necessary regulation of the tendency toward selfish government, which is as common in popular as in class legislation.

## APPENDIX

## (a) CHRONOLOGY—

B.C. 384	.	.	Birth of Aristotle.
367	.	.	Aristotle at Athens ; pupil of Plato.
343	.	.	Goes to Macedonia as tutor of Alexander.
338	.	.	Philip's victory at Chaeronea. Decay of the City-State.
335	.	.	Aristotle at Athens ; founds his school.
323	.	.	Death of Alexander.
322	.	.	Death of Aristotle.

(b) The required works are Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Politics*. In the *Politics*, bks. I. and VII. (trans. by Jowett, Oxford ed., 1908) show most clearly the general ethico-political doctrines. In the *Ethics* the following topics may be specially indicated : Justice, as treated in bk. V., is probably the most fundamental part of Aristotle's ethico-political teaching. The fifth chapter of bk. VII. should be noted. The *Politics*, bk. VII., contain a summary of the ethical doctrine. The account here given lays very little emphasis on the logic and metaphysics of Aristotle, being intentionally confined to questions of the Polis as a social system. The following special topics should be developed carefully :—

(a) The nature of social unity : treated in *Ethics*, bk. IX., under the general term "Friendship." Aristotle says "it is a law of nature that the offspring should feel a love for its parent, and the parent for its offspring"—this is a general law—a mutual affection exists in all beings of the same kind, most of all in men : friendship holds together the body politic ; it is superior to justice ; unanimity is not unlike friendship. Thus Aristotle gives the social unity a psychological and natural basis ; man is a "mating animal" in a sense that goes deeper than the definition "man is an animal adapted for the Polis" ; and this "mating" is a way of self-completing, since the true friend fulfils his function in supplying deficient qualities. It is

not the sentimental aspect that appeals to the Greek; the feeling involved in friendship is not a romantic sentiment so much as a recognition of limitations and of the necessity of an "alter ego." So it is possible to pass easily from the union of two lives, e.g. in intellectual work, to the union of many lives in the complete fellowship of the ideal State (cf. Burke, quoted p. 282).

(b) The nature of the ideal life, described in *Ethics*, bk. x. 6-8. The statements of Aristotle show that he regarded contemplation as the true object of life. This is the logical conclusion of the position that the soul is superior to the body. The Greeks did not favour the view that thought is for the sake of action; they did not appreciate the sentiment of the motto, "Blessed be drudgery": the material things of this world are only secondary in value, and to accumulate wealth or rejoice in petty transactions seemed to them vulgar, like the idea of living to eat. The goal or limit is given by reason. As we eat in order to live, so we work in order to make the world a better place for higher activities. In the historic phrase, "Strive so far as is possible to put on immortality" (*Ethics*, x. 7), Aristotle shows how much Platonism and spiritual ideas really controlled his scientific analysis of practical activities.

(c) The subject of Pleasure is treated in *Ethics*, bks. vii. and x. The close affinity between Aristotle and Spencer is worth noticing. For both, pleasure has biological value: it is in Aristotle the "concomitant of unimpeded action"; and in Spencer "the correlative of actions conducive to higher vitality." Both writers are fully aware that morality is a complex question involving physical, biological, sociological, and in a remoter sense religious points of view.

(d) The discussion of responsibility is found in *Ethics*, bk. iii. The problem of freedom of the will belongs to a later age and is not here discussed.

(e) For Aristotle's view of slavery, see p. 139.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE COSMOPOLITAN AGE

§ 1. THE greatness of Plato and of Aristotle blinds us at times to the inherent faults of Greek life. Yet theirs was the age in which those faults became most apparent. The limits of the City-State had been already passed in practice: its walls no longer held the spirits of its citizens: the possibility of empire was cherished by each and all, but none succeeded either in constructing a federal empire or in asserting itself as lord over the rest. The Greek world was hopelessly disunited and seemed destined to remain so. As everyone knows, the end came swiftly: the dreaded Philip of Macedon was reported to be dead, the market-places of Greece throbbed to the news, the Macedonian cloud seemed to lift and open to every aspiring city a vista of renewed supremacy; then Alexander took the dead King's place, and the Empire which he organised seemed by its vastness to make the noise of Greek cities no longer audible. Thebes alone roused the Macedonian to action: its rebellion was treated with swift and summary execution; where it once flourished nothing was left but the barracks of a Macedonian contingent.

But Alexander himself was soon to die (323 B.C.), and in many respects the events which followed his death were as important as his own conquests. For his successors finally determined the form of the Hellenistic world. By 301 the whole Empire which Alexander created but had not time to consolidate was divided up into five great sections: one to the North centering upon Macedonia, one in Western Asia (Phrygia), one to the East controlled from Babylon, one to the South in Egypt, and one in Thrace. Of these the kingdoms of Babylonia and of Egypt were destined to be most important, but already another power was beginning its victorious career. Rome was master of all Italy by 265 B.C. The process of expansion began very quickly; Roman armies were victorious both east and west of Italy; Greece, Babylon, and Egypt shared the fate which befell Gaul and Britain, the empire of Alexander was swallowed up in a still more expansive world-empire, and under the Cæsars the kingdom of the Romans was a synonym for the habitable world.

As we think over these two vast organisations, the empire of Alexander and the empire of the Cæsars, one point of difference is clear. The empire of Alexander mediates between the Greek city and the Roman Empire. For it was never a genuine empire; the genius that made it what it was did not live to complete the work, and individualism rather than imperialism is the real essence of its nature. As Alexander was the living embodiment of that genius whom the Greeks long anticipated, the divine man who should rule by right of individual superiority, so his empire

did not break away from old traditions altogether, but settled into a middle condition, becoming in reality not an empire but a loosely united group of nations. As time went on the national spirit grew, notably in the case of Egypt, where the rulers were far-seeing enough to come to terms with Rome at an early date and so pass into the Roman Empire with less damage to their independence. Politically the area conquered by Alexander never formed a real empire, but it was none the less the sphere of a new culture that realised all the characteristics of an empire.

§ 2. At the present time no period in the history of culture is more interesting than the last three centuries of the pagan era. In every direction there were developments which present new features of interest. First and foremost comes the cosmopolitan character of this age. The barriers between city and city, even the barrier between East and West, were thrown down. It was a cosmopolitan age, marked by what is most aptly described as universalism. This is clearly seen in the new outlook of its speculative systems. On the one hand, Stoicism arises as the exponent of a doctrine based on a new view of humanity. The first group of Stoics, Zeno, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus, are men of Asiatic origin for whom the traditions of the City-State have no vital significance. They are themselves citizens of the world, and they think no more of the old distinction between Greek and barbarian. Their talk is of the universe as an undivided whole, ruled by one common reason; the common nature of man, no longer a creature of cities (*ζῶον πολιτικόν*) but a member of one race

(ζῶον κοινωνικόν), seems to them more real even for practical daily life than the old divisions of tribe and city; the new life colours all their teaching, and produces for the first time a vivid consciousness of the brotherhood of man. In all this there is undoubtedly much that is negative. The spiritual unity of man is not realised, and the idea of unity tends more to indifference than to fellowship. For the first result of loosening the old bonds is to disunite rather than reunite, and the absence of immediate patriotic interests turns man loose in a vaguely defined world where he seeks in vain for the warmth and intimacy of the old tribal hearth or the city temples.

The citizen of the world soon discovers that the world is not a city; he is really not a citizen at all, and to be the brother of all men is to be no man's brother. In this way the very root of universalism proves to be individualism; the paradox exists only in the words, not in practice. By the side of Stoicism there is always room for Epicureanism, because these are the two aspects of life which seem to co-exist as inevitably as convex and concave in the structure of the circle. While the outer life expands the inner contracts; when the political area widens beyond the grasp of the average individual, the domestic sphere contracts into a hard, resisting atom; the individual acquires a greater freedom of movement, and at the same time tends more and more to circle upon the pivot of his own limited interests; as trader or traveller he may roam in new lands, but his spirit desires more and more to dwell only in itself. These are, if we may trust the apparent lessons of history, the un-

changing features of large territorial empires as regards the outer life universalism prevails and for the inner life of the spirit there is a corresponding individualism

The ages which produce this type of individualism are usually marked by the prevalence of scepticism. The individual may either retire within himself and adopt some form of quietism or satisfy his aggressive tendencies by attacking accepted truths. The symptom in the latter case is not altogether unhealthy. Scepticism denotes no more than a spirit of vigorous inquiry and plays a very distinct part in the transition from one type of life to another. It is part of the process by which a nation or a school of thought sloughs off its old doctrine its excesses are invariably curbed by the requirements of the active life as the sceptic finds that the daily round of duties is not vitally affected by his denial of dogmas. It seems in this way to fix thought on the essential elements of life and from these again there arises inevitably a new growth of constructive thought. In the period of which we are now speaking scepticism served two distinct purposes. Its activity was most shown in the destruction of those narrow beliefs which could not stand the strain of political and mental expansion. Those religious beliefs which had owed their origin and their power to special local conditions were the natural objects of attack and fell easily before its assault. Even the earlier speculative systems of philosophy were legitimate targets for they too needed reconstruction in the light of actual achievements and had fallen behind in the advance of nations



Absolute scepticism is a fiction; the genuine thinker, who alone need be considered, has some firm ground from which to direct his artillery; if he will not accept the beliefs of others, it is because he has formed a definite view of the world which is not in harmony with accepted doctrines. Carneades, in the second century before Christ, is an illustration of this point. He questions the very fact of certainty because he sees that men claim to be most certain where certainty is least possible; he reserves the right to say that we may be *practically* certain, sure of our facts and of their limited significance, and so in our actions combine the will that achieves with the intellect that is not enslaved to fixed formulæ. Only the few can maintain such a delicate poise. The keynote of scepticism is not denial, but suspension of judgment; in philosophy or in religion its attitude is one of reserve, which finds no popular favour because enthusiasm dislikes criticism, and prefers impetuous haste before such cold rationalism. Cicero shared with Carneades the critical attitude toward ultimate and dogmatic positions; but in the sphere of action he prefers to accept uncritically a view that gives free play to the emotions of hope and the strivings of ambition.

§ 3. The points of view which are so clearly marked by these groups of thinkers (the Stoic, the Epicurean, and the Sceptic) were also expressed with equal clearness in the institutions of the age. The systems of philosophers are one expression of national thought; another and a still more eloquent expression is found in those crystallisations of thought which are called

institutions Among these religion must first be considered, for it is *invariably* the surest index to the state of a nation In this age we find at once that the chasm between the Universe and Man between universalism and individualism, expressed itself in a dualism of the religious life The Stoic philosophy, always deeply religious took for its concept of God the idea of all-pervading reason and became, in spite of itself, a doctrine of eternal necessity and inevitable causality The classical Greek always revered law as ultimately impersonal In the Hellenistic age law became impersonal in a new sense, it became the changeless decree of a monarch to whom most men could not approach, the monarch became more and more a god on earth, and at the same time the god that is in heaven became an object of reverence devoid of love, a disembodied Law As the State grew into a definite organisation and an official system, excluding from its action the interests and activities of unofficial persons so religion became a technical mode of procedure for which properly trained officials were required The earthly ruler became the centre of a court and nearness to him was a privilege accorded only to people of sufficient importance, the heavenly ruler also became a Supreme Being to whom only the appointed priests might draw near and they only by way of the organised ritual Everywhere there is the same pervading tone of rigidity and organisation But as the reason is *different* from the emotions, so the religion of the State thus organised is different from the spontaneousness of the heart A religion that is pre-eminently formal is not an experience, and

it never succeeds in satisfying the demand of the individual for direct religious experience. So, alongside the religion of the State there grew up minor forms of religious organisation which owe their vitality to their grip upon human feeling. These minor forms vary from highly æsthetic cults to the wildest orgies, but they all agree in supplying an outlet for the emotions of the individual, and recreating the smaller groups of "brethren," in which the individual can again find support in the struggles of life. The steady influx of Eastern religions into the West during the last two centuries before Christ is to be understood as supplying this emotional demand. The East had long been accustomed to monarchy; their cults had long taken on the form which adapted them for transference, since they were universal in significance, even when they had definite local character. When channels of communication were once opened up the emotional fervour of the East flowed into the West, and no official action succeeded in checking the process. From the middle of the second century B.C. there is clear evidence of this process at work in the Roman world. The cults of the Phrygian deities were among the first to gain a footing: others quickly followed, and among them that of Mithra finally spread so far as to be almost a universal religion throughout the Roman world. The State, having failed to do more than suppress disorderly conduct, retired from the contest and consented to a divided allegiance. At the end of the Roman Republic the independence of religious feeling is very strongly marked; the political organisation has wholly ceased to have any

real connection with the life of man, the magnificent system of Roman law and administration becomes a neutral science of conduct for which the religion of the subject is a matter of indifference. In this there were advantages as well as disadvantages but as this aspect of imperial organisation was a special point in the reforms of Augustus, we shall return to it later in that connection.

§ 4 From questions of philosophy and religion we turn to commerce, and find in that sphere, no less than the others, a new spirit and new developments. In the first place there is an advance in specialisation. Greater freedom of intercourse leads to the establishment of systematic transport, in place of the immediate transfer of goods from one town to another, on a basis of personal friendliness there is a tendency toward open markets. In other words, the commercial interests refuse to be bound up with questions of nationality and religion. production demands freedom from these irrelevant restraints and the material advantages of commerce soon lead to a new type of policy. There had already been instances of specialisation in commerce notably that of the Phœnicians, and the question of trade-routes had been from time immemorial the cause of wars. But hitherto these cases had been very isolated in character, no one had cared to do more than make use of the ships that toured round the Mediterranean, whereas in one instance at least in this Hellenic era we have an example of a mercantile city claiming to be the neutral ground for all comers, enlisting the support of other cities on the ground of its commercial importance.

and confining its aggressive policy to the suppression of pirates and the protection of trade-interests. The city in question was Rhodes, which, after 300 B.C., became a first-class power with a purely commercial policy. Here, for perhaps the first time, we find the recognition of an international unity not based on military force; for it seems certain that the power of Rhodes was respected by people superior in arms, who recognised that such organisations of commerce were a benefit to mankind that could be destroyed but not restored by force of arms.

The literary developments of this period are peculiarly interesting. The individualism of the age makes its interests intensely personal. The mass of events which make up the history of these times could not be presented with the dramatic unity of former historians. Life was now more full of variety, and there was no time to read ponderous works. In every direction there is a tendency toward greater brevity and attractiveness. The successful poet is the neat writer of idylls and epigrams, the historian becomes a retailer of incidents in the lives of great men; the stage is crowded with figures "human, all too human," and the successful play is one that appeals to the social rather than the religious instincts of men. The guidance of emotions is very obvious, especially in the significant development of sentimental stories about love and happiness. The Western world began at this point to substitute for gods and heroes the ordinary people, and to demand the kind of emotional literature which is supplied by the novelist.

The development of literature in this sense, that is

production of works to be read by the public, was not due to an extensive education of the people, but only to the increased area and consequent increase in the number of educated people who appreciated the writer's art. The masters of literary form became more widely known, and this led to a self-conscious cultivation of style. It led also to a rivalry between places for the possession of famous men and a literary reputation. The most famous example of this centralising process—then, as now, a feature of the interest in city life—was the establishment of a "school," or university, at Alexandria, along with a magnificent library. The energy and ambition of the Ptolemies raised Alexandria to an unequalled position in the age of Hellenistic culture, for efficiency it was perhaps never surpassed, but it was always devoid of that peculiar intellectual power that made and kept Athens supreme. The literature of Alexandria was never more than an afterglow of the Athenian glory, and made its mark for encyclopædic learning rather than creative genius. As the aspirant for literary honours cultivated the style and the subjects which pleased the tastes of his public, so the scholar became a royal officer in the department of knowledge. On the one hand, individualism called forth the novel, the idyll, and the biography; on the other, universalism produced the technical organisation of literature in encyclopædic works and made culture the peculiar possession of the trained expert who lived in the atmosphere of courts by the bounty of princes.

As we noted above, there is no proof of any systematic education of the people at this time, but there

was a remarkable interest in education as one of the duties of the rich and of princes. The idea of education was no longer that which Plato developed, for there was no longer any incentive to undertake the production of good citizens. In place of that idea we have the Hellenistic view, more allied to the Sophistic schemes, that education is a definite training in some particular branch of knowledge, a way of acquiring proficiency in the arts and the sciences. The education now offered is technical in the proper sense of the term, a training in the art of doing something. The result was a remarkable output of eminent men in such sciences as astronomy, geography, and medicine. This was a substantial gain, and must always remain a credit to the age; for the problem of making citizens by a course of education is not yet solved, and the next best thing is undoubtedly the provision of opportunity for genius.

§ 5. Enough has been said to suggest the various ways in which the culture of the City-State broke through its barriers and spread over that loose confederation of nations which made up the Hellenistic world. There was a gradual shifting of the centre of thought westward, until at last Rome was the real focus of the world's interests, with Athens still the representative of ideal culture, and Alexandria the home of the new learning. At this point it is convenient to pause and see how political thinkers faced the new conditions, and what speculative interpretation they were able to give of the new disposition of forces. We may take for special notice two men, separated by a century, who in different ways were

eminently qualified to estimate the character of the age—Polybius and Cicero

Polybius was by birth a Greek, but for sixteen years he resided in Italy as a hostage (167-151 B C) . These circumstances made him an impartial spectator of the Roman constitution before the age of the Gracchi . He looked at Rome with the eyes of a Greek and set himself the problem of finding the secret of Roman power . His basis is that of the Greek philosophers, with whom he agrees in taking as the main types of government monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, with their perversions . Thus the rule of a nation begins with submission to a strong leader monarchy based on force . In time the people force the monarch to obey laws, and to convert his rule into a limited monarchy . The power thus given to those who check the royal will leads to aristocracy which degenerates into oligarchy , finally, the people govern themselves in democracy which becomes corrupt and ends with mob-rule . This theory of government is regulated by the idea that several distinct powers co-exist in a State . As the corruption arises from the undue influence of one, the secret of continuity is declared to be an equilibrium of forces produced by mutual restraint . In Rome, with its consuls, senate, and assembly, he sees an example of government in which each power is checked by another . Hence its stability, due to its being a " *mixed* " constitution . So far we have the traditional theory of Greek politics reproduced but Polybius soon shows the influence of new conditions . His basis is rationalistic, he believes that the factors in the life of a State are not



principles but natural forces, grouped in classes and represented by masses of people with different interests. The motive to action is self-interest, and the statesman has to treat interests as natural forces. The ruler, for example, uses religion as an instrument with which to control the masses; a man may side with a foreign power against his own citizens if it seems to him right to do so; consistent patriotism may be mere bigotry; individual judgment, in short, takes precedence over established principles. Here we have a very detached treatment of political principles which breathes the spirit of emancipation, and has been compared with the attitude of Machiavelli, a comparison that is admissible if we emphasise in the work of Polybius the idea that nations are masses of people to be controlled by a system of mutual restraints and by any forces that are available for that purpose.

History refuted the doctrine of Polybius. Rome did not succeed in keeping an equilibrium by her apparent balance of forces. The Republic was convulsed by a democratic movement, and came back finally to a thinly disguised tyranny. Cicero, writing when the tendencies to monarchy were already apparent, still maintains the doctrine of Polybius, both writers being really exponents of a common Stoic doctrine. But Cicero acquires further importance through being the effective teacher of political Stoicism in another direction, that of natural law. This important subject we must now state as fully as possible, for after a lapse of fifteen centuries it again became effective in European political life.

Cicero's real problem is to give a satisfactory basis

for a world empire. The Stoic doctrine furnished a starting-point, for it taught that Reason pervades the whole Universe, guides the course of the world and is immanent in every individual. There should, consequently, be certain laws of reason which all men willingly obey if their own reason is developed, and may rightly be compelled to obey if they have not the intelligence to see the rationality of the laws. Thus, at one stroke, the eternal and immutable nature of Law is established along with the right to coerce. The real importance of this theory lay in the fact that it gave a practical working significance to the sentimental doctrine of human brotherhood, it put in a clear light, and in a way that appealed to the cultivated Roman, the necessity of disregarding distinctions of race and locality in the construction of laws. The Law of Nature thus became the basis for a system of laws which were consciously framed to be of universal application. We cannot overestimate the value of this idea for the history of Western political theory. It gave once for all, a social significance to the fact of law and established the principle that all men, taken simply as men and not as citizens of this or that community, have equal rights so far as concerns the elements of justice. The Greeks had conceived justice to be in its essence universal, but the theory was an empty principle so long as there was no opportunity to give it expression in a universal code. To Rome fell the task of welding many different nations into one unified empire, the effort owed its most enduring results to this concept of humanity as by nature one and so by nature destined to be ruled

by universal principles. The reign of law, which logically follows from this basis, became in fact the rule of Emperors. Cicero shirks the issue and passes lightly from his metaphysic of law to an exposition that assumes the divine government of the world and the Roman supremacy to be identical. It is only in theory that the law of nature is acknowledged "always and everywhere and by all"; in practice the Roman code and Roman arms supplied all deficiencies. But two points may be mentioned to modify this criticism: in the first place, the Romans established an excellent system of law which created order over a wide area with the minimum of friction; and, secondly, there was at that time ample excuse for seeing in the Roman power a force providentially destined to carry out the work of the divine Reason.

## APPENDIX

### (a) CHRONOLOGY—

B.C. 323	. .	Death of Alexander.
322	. .	Death of Aristotle.
307	. .	Epicurus founds his school at Athens.
264	. .	Death of Zeno, Stoic. [Rome now becomes mistress of Italy.]
155	. .	C Carneades head of the Platonic School (Middle Academy). Philosophy introduced to Rome.
144-129	. .	Panætius and Posidonius belong to the "Scipionic circle"; they influence later writers (Cicero).
63		Lucretius teaches Epicureanism.
55 (about)	. .	Cicero popularises Stoicism in Latin treatises and translations.

[The chronology here overlaps that of Chapter VII.]

(b) References. Mahaffy, *Greek Life and Thought*, for the description of the Hellenistic world. Croiset, *History of Greek Literature*, for Alexandrian writers. Dunning, *Political Theories, Ancient and Medieval*, gives an account of Polybius and Cicero. Cicero's ethics are important as the medium through which modified Stoicism came into the West, he was the source of many ideas in the writings of the Church Fathers, e.g. Ambrose. The Stoic doctrine and influence is discussed later (p. 146). The seventeenth century writers (Hobbes, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Locke, and others) were greatly influenced by Stoic ideas, usually from Roman sources and mainly from Cicero. For a summary of this development see Bryce, "Studies in History and Jurisprudence," Essay XI., *The Law of Nature*.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE ROMAN REPUBLIC

§ 1. As we turn from the study of Greek culture to that of Rome, we think at once of the well-known passage in Mommson where these two types are appraised. "It is time," says that historian, "to desist from that childish view of history which believes that it can commend the Greeks only at the expense of the Romans, or the Romans only at the expense of the Greeks; and, as we allow the oak to hold its own beside the rose, so should we abstain from praising or censuring the two noblest organisations which antiquity has produced, and comprehend the truth that their distinctive excellences have a necessary connection with their defects." In their different times and ways these two great organisations occupied a similar prominence, and they continually challenge comparison. There is a striking similarity in the stages of their development, and a superficial glance would serve to show little more than a repetition of history. But while it is true that both organisations are species of one genius, they are species that ultimately display very fundamental differences. Our purpose requires us to indicate how those differences

emerge as the civilisation grows more definite and self-conscious and in order to achieve this it is necessary to sketch as briefly as possible the process of development

The city of Rome emerges from prehistoric and legendary times as a combination of smaller communities previously separated. The process of amalgamation can only be conjectured but there is little doubt that in Italy as in Greece scattered villages were found insecure against raiders and consequently the inhabitants tended to unite in the occupation of some particularly defensible locality. In such a place men could gain security for themselves and what was still more important for their gods. A citadel and a temple formed the material signs of the new centre of life just as a fort and a church are the landmarks of a modern military outpost. With this centralisation begins a new life. Previously there was some kind of leadership and the ruler of the family or tribe was king in the Homeric sense a chief who could lead in war dispense justice in peace and preserve the religious traditions. But the new community demanded a more definite organisation and the nature of this overlordship underwent a change at the period when the City-State began in Italy. That change is marked by the word *Imperium*. 'This word *imperium*' introduces us at once to a new range of ideas which we may call political and which belong to the newly realised life of the City State. *Imperium* is a technical term the first we meet with, for there is no Homeric word which can be regarded as such politically. It marks the power of the king

as distinguished from the power of the head of a family or village community ; it expresses the supreme power of the chief magistrate *in an organised State.*"<sup>1</sup>

Even at this early stage there are signs of a difference between Roman and Greek. The Roman rex and the Homeric Basileus are both species of one genus, the *primitive monarch* ; in both cases the monarch unites political, judicial, military, and religious authority. But at the crisis in which a new type of society is being formed the Roman seems to grasp the idea of authority as distinct from personal ascendancy. In this, as in other crises of Roman history, the individual counts for nothing, in comparison with the office. The Romans converted the head of the tribe into the first magistrate of the State by a stroke of natural genius ; they preserved the essential, absolute control over the undeveloped community, along with effective restraints. The king is a ruler who is himself ruled by law ; the real sovereign is the people gathered in the assembly ; the law is a contract made between the king and the people, for he proposes the laws and the people give the assent or refusal which establishes or annuls his right of action.

§ 2. From monarchy Rome passed to another form of government which owed its origin to the burgesses, now become a distinguishable class or nobility. This class became a *separate power* because, as the number of the people increased, a distinction was preserved between the original burgesses and the later arrivals, the former being the true patricians. As this class was not essentially inferior to the king, they preferred

<sup>1</sup> Warde-Fowler, *City-State, etc.*, p. 75.

to share the power of the first magistrate rather than continue the method by which one was permanently superior. So they limited the king to the guardianship of religious traditions, and his title survived in the office of the *rex sacrorum*. The kingship was not in fact destroyed, but became more emphatically impersonal through the division of its powers between two magistrates and the limitation of the office to a year's length. The net result was that an aristocracy with a permanent head gave place to an aristocracy with a supreme magistracy undertaken by two of them as occasion required. These chief magistrates, the consuls, were holders of the imperium in peace and war, restricted in the city, but unrestricted in the camp. The Romans never wholly deserted the military form of organisation, their city was never more than a camp free from fear of enemies, and their camp was a city in action. In time of war everything could revert to the military rule of the camp, in peace the people were summoned to appear in military array when there were political assemblies. The recognition of this military basis and its advantages made the Roman willing to leave the function of the king as general practically untouched when the king as political head of the State made way for consuls and a republic.

The growth of the republic is foreshadowed by the Servian reforms. At first there seems to have been no distinction of classes, but as the community grew, the original burgesses began to attain a position of superiority. Thus there were nobles and inferiors, the latter being regarded as legally dependent on the



former and as politically entitled to a very limited share in affairs of State. Gradually the importance of these inferiors became greater; their numbers increased and they were required for defence if for nothing more. So the military organisation of the State was adapted in order to make use of them. The process corresponded to the reform of Cleisthenes at Athens, and its most significant feature was the substitution of locality for kinship as a basis of organisation. But the peculiarity of this arrangement was the fact that it was in no sense a union of the people; it has been felicitously called a treaty between the antagonistic classes, not a union; the original burgesses remained in possession of all the privileges and so became a privileged aristocracy. The next struggle, extending over centuries, was the struggle of the organised proletariat for effective participation in the government. The resistance was stubborn. In 494 B.C. the people obtained special officers called tribunes as their leaders, but their power was so limited that nothing was gained in the way of sharing in the government of the State. In 451 B.C. the publication of the Ten Tables made the legal traditions common property and wrested from the patricians one privilege. In 449 the plebeian assembly began to legislate, and the right of the patricians to be regarded as the ruling class was taken from them.

Success in the open arena of politics is not everything. A man may succeed in gaining a majority in his constituency without thereby earning a place at the dinner-table of the county family. The situation is common in books and in life; we require only to

remember that it is most common in books of history. There we deal with social questions in terms of the class rather than the individual, but the point is the same. If the patrician had to acknowledge the will of the plebeian as law in the state, he still could say that there was no bar in the pedigree, no traitor to class distinctions within the clan. In 445 the legal barrier against intermarriage was removed, whether the social line was crossed or not, the principle was established and the disability removed. Seventy-eight years went past, the Gaul came down on Rome in 390, compelling for a time the unity that is bred of a common danger, and then in 367 B.C. the consulship was open to plebeians, at first in junction with a patrician and afterwards, if it so happened, both consuls might be plebeian.

§ 3 By the victory of 367 the plebeians seem to have won all that they cared to demand. Only the most casual reader of the history of these movements could mistake them for a democratic evolution. The whole question lay between an old and a new aristocracy, between the aristocracy of birth and the aristocracy of wealth. When the wealthy upstart succeeds in making a way for himself to the highest offices of the State he has no further need of "popular" support. This explains the peculiar way in which the development of Rome seems to be arrested midway. The common people neither had nor wanted political power. The upper middle class, strengthened by their own wealth and by the decay of the Patrician families, desired to get public offices into their hands in order to control officially the expansion which was their aim. During the

fourth and the third centuries we see this process going on. The new aristocracy has good businesslike ability; there is pressing need for a strong central control during the days of the Hannibalic wars; so that the government of the Senate seems to be restored to its old prestige. Yet the times had really changed, and were still changing. The efficiency of the new government was too apt to show itself in temporary expedients and shortsighted patchwork. No attempt was made to cope with the increasing difficulty of managing the proletariat, no genius arose to substitute for the old principles of submission any new principles of enlightenment. The new aristocracy was really an oligarchy, and its end was achieved so long as the army continued to supply it with land wrested from enemies to be given to the poor. The result of this was the creation of a new problem. When the urban population had been drafted out to the new colonies and the possibilities of expansion became daily more limited, the old agrarian trouble began once more. In 133 we find the government has come to the end of its policy of postponement and has no further resources. The question has now become a question of ruling a country, and yet there is nothing but the old machinery of the City-State. From this point onward the history of Rome is the history of a steady decline, ending in the extinction of the imperial republic and the return to monarchy.

That idea of a common good, which was the ruling principle of earlier days, seemed at this stage to lose all its power. The struggle was an undisguised struggle for individual gain. The increasing power of the

people was *only apparent*, its real political significance was the opportunity it afforded to high-spirited individuals. In a word, the State was already gravitating toward that kind of tyranny which the ablest man could attain by putting himself at the head of the people. The Gracchi were men of this kind, tyrants in the sense that they could be individual leaders of the masses by their power to control and use the undeveloped political instincts of the people. The oligarchy recognised their enemy and fought for their supremacy.

The course of events was determined by the creation of a third power, that of the army. The oligarchical interests created a military force which became more and more independent of the Senate as it ceased to be a citizen army. The history of the declining republic becomes a history of individuals with various interests, made irresistible by the adherence of the army. Marius, Sulla, and Julius Cæsar are the outstanding figures during the last phase, they all show an individualism that was new to the Roman world combined with remnants of that devotion to the best interests of the country which seems to have been to the end a well-preserved inheritance from the old times.

§ 4 The transition from republic to empire was preceded by a steady transformation of the Roman people. In the temper of the masses over whom the first emperor ruled there is not much that reminds us of the earliest days of the republic. The primitive Roman community seems to have been singularly united. Its legal, social, and religious sanctions were all

phases of a system that began and ended in the natural unity of the family. Simplicity was the strength of this system and rigidity was its weakness. The term "piety" has come down to modern times to denote the right attitude of men toward the Father, who is God. For the Roman, too, it indicated the essence of religion, the right attitude of the son to the father, of descendants to ancestors. As we trace the idea backward it seems possible to discern in the religion of the Italian peoples a stage at which the predominant idea was that of the family; but the idea of kinship is, from the earliest times, a convenient fiction. The migrating tribe, when it settles in a new territory, splits into divisions, the clans. The clan has for its head the legendary "pater" or ancestor, but it again divides into the families which are held together by the actual living head of the family, the overlord of the group. As the group always might, and usually did, include persons of alien stock, the term "family" was used for an economic group without any implied kinship. It was natural that in such a group there should be many for whom the bond of unity was real blood-relationship, and among these the basis of religion might well be ancestor-worship. But the Roman had a wonderful power of seeing the practical side of life; and this is nowhere more clearly shown than in the sphere of religion. The ultimate good of religion consists, for the Roman, in the maintenance of peace between men. To secure this it is necessary to have an adequate system of observances, so that each one may know what is expected of him. There is also a peace to be maintained between man and the gods, and

for this there must be a well regulated system of duties or rites. This clear view of the social significance of religion explains the way in which the religion of the family was made adequate to the actual constitution of the family. The religion was not in its essence exclusive on the contrary it was the very principle by which primitive fear and animosity could be overcome. The slave had his religious position defined and became a member of the family in virtue of the rights which were thus conferred upon him. The stranger always a possible enemy if he came without due guarantees could be brought under the *Jus hospitii* and so given a recognised status. In every direction we see that there is behind the Roman view of religion an idea of order and a desire to give each one his definite place in that order. The natural expression of this desire was the law to which we must return later. In religion this spirit may run to excess. When the Romans undertook to organise their religion they became too acutely conscious of their tendency to systematise they tended to make the letter supersede the spirit. The religion of the City State begins from the Calendar of Numa and shows at once the over development of legalism. Everything seems to be settled and known the individual Roman may not have been wholly lacking in imagination but he was not given room to exercise it. Practical needs produce changes in those regulations that affect our intercourse with people and so long as religious and political management was united there was a healthy power of growth. But the priest was too much hedged about with restrictions to cope with the growing complexity

of the new State ; it became necessary to separate the political from the religious functions, and the consequence was that religion tended to become more and more an inflexible system of ritualistic observances. The religion of the original Latin peoples remained the peculiar property of the patricians, but the arrival of new settlers and the development of trade caused a continual readjustment of the relations between men and gods. Because religion was for the Roman a part of his practical life, it had to be kept abreast of the times ; if the development of trade brought with it new circumstances, new rites and observances were evolved to meet them. From an early date there are cases of " new gods " ; the crisis of 218 B. C. seems to have revealed in the people an excitability that required some outlet, and the authorities were driven to allow orgiastic rites quite foreign to the spirit of the old religion. It has been stated that the real cause of this extreme innovation was the fact that Rome was deprived of men ; eighty thousand had fallen at Cannæ, and the women, who were normally under the control of the male head of the household, gave themselves up to the less restrained forms of worship introduced from the East. But we cannot suppose that this would have occurred if the Roman women had preserved that sternness of character for which they had previously been famous. Behind the introduction of new gods and new forms of worship we see the growing individualism of the citizens. The State as a focus of thought and energy steadily declines in power ; in religion as in politics there is too much desire to satisfy, and too little effort to educate, the growing population.

In 167 the memorable embassy from Greece arrived. The freedom of Greek thought came as a revelation to the Roman. philosophy began to change his outlook. A few were able to adopt the new ideas and we find a small coterie henceforth pursuing a new path. It is significant that Ennius one of the earliest openly expressed his belief that the gods had no care for men. But if the circles of the elder and the younger Scipio cultivated philosophy there was no reforming power in their beliefs that could stop the general decline of religion. The philosopher of this age was not inspired with any missionary zeal. the politicians such as Cicero looked upon religion as a necessary part of the administration with no regard to the spiritual welfare of the people. the natural emotions that might have been guided and developed were left to find satisfaction where they could. The Roman was very tolerant but his tolerance was rooted in indifference. His most effective creed was the law and he condemned as conspiracy any religious unions that seemed likely to disturb the reign of law and order apart from that he did not interest himself in the progress of religious beliefs. At the close of the Republic the old religious unity seems quite lost. Private religions increased in number and variety leading to countless forms of superstition. the earlier ideals of loyalty and fidelity gave place to forms of penance and expiation that undermined the moral strength of the nation and made it the prey of charlatans.

§ 5 The age of Cicero was an age of culture. The stern morality of the earlier days was dissipated by the rapid increase of wealth that marked the second



century B.C., and an extension of territory that afforded too much scope for speculation and corruption. In place of the outworn creed there came a new doctrine, mainly Stoic, but adapted by its teachers to the needs and the temperament of the Romans. At this point the history of Roman views of conduct becomes a part of the wider history of Græco-Roman culture. In that connection we shall see how the Roman genius for law united with the Stoic doctrine to form one of the most influential theories in the history of western morality. Before we leave the Republic and pass into that wider sphere, it will be useful to note a few characteristics of the Roman view of life. In common with other nations the history of the Roman people begins with an organisation that centres about the idea of the family. But Rome was peculiar in preserving to a very late date the essential features of this type of organisation. In Roman law the family is regarded as having legal status only in and through the head of the family. The *patria potestas*, the legal power of the "pater," was in theory supreme over all the members of the family. In consequence of this the wife, the sons, the slaves, all came under the absolute jurisdiction of the "pater." This legal theory was originally a religious observance based upon the primitive organisation of the family. It underwent continual modification; for example, the son when on military duty was not regarded as under the potestas of the father, and the son as a public official might pass judgment on his father. But in spite of modifications due either to actual legislation or to the growth of public sentiment, the principle remained unaltered.

and had certain effects on the morality of the nation that deserve notice. The whole idea is foreign to our notions which in this respect follow from the greater individualism of the Teutonic law and the difference between the Roman standpoint and that of the barbarians was so keenly felt when their laws were first compared that the rejection of this *patria potestas* was expressly stated.

The first and most obvious result of this system when we pass from the family to the State is that it virtually denies the individual worth of the greater part of the population. Such a condition of affairs could not be maintained in a developing society and the result was in fact a number of undesirable compromises. Women were in the eyes of the law absolutely under the control of the *pater* that is to say the daughter was under the control of the father until she married and passed into the control of the husband. In the second century the religious sanctity of marriage began to lose its hold on the minds of Romans and the disadvantages of the legal restraints which were incurred led to a more general adoption of those forms of marriage by which the wife remained in the control of the father. In practice this was a form of emancipation the woman could reject the control of either as she pleased taking refuge with her husband when she quarrelled with her family and returning in time to prevent her husband from establishing any legal right to control her. This was one of the results of subordinating the idea of marriage to that of family prosperity and connecting it too closely with ideas of property. It is not to be supposed that the women as a body ceased

to have any morality as soon as the strictness of the original system was relaxed. Such sweeping generalisations are hardly ever true of normal societies. On the contrary, there is evidence of high ideals and noble devotion at this as at other times, but they coexist with a new spirit of individuality. The Roman system always gave to the lady of the house a position that commanded respect, and seems to have been eminently successful in producing fine women. But while the Romans created a noble sphere of activity for women in the household, they were in the end faced with the problem of a place for women in the State, and that was quite a different question.

The same process may be studied in the case of the slaves. They too came under the absolute jurisdiction of the "pater." The moral result was two-fold. By this system the masters were given a position which calls for the highest qualities of character and tends to promote the worst vices. In many cases we know that the position of a slave was no worse than that of any other kind of servant; the slave might be a confidential secretary and a trusted friend. But these facts do not prove the principle good. If we take into consideration the farms and villas of Italy, we see what slavery meant for the majority. The slave was his master's property; he was carried away from his home to be one of a herd, driven out by day to work, and driven back at night to wait in a dungeon for the next day's work. The slavery of the second century before Christ was almost purely mercantile. It was not a condition into which a few fell by *misfortune*; we read of slave-markets regularly organised and doing a

brisk trade, as many as 10,000 being sold in a day. Whatever may be said about the slavery of earlier days, we cannot excuse the Roman from a sordid traffic in human labour. In this respect the Roman seems to have been persistently defective in a sense for freedom as such, his nature demanded a system, and he was content to be part of a system. His sympathy was not quickly roused for those who were the victims of his success. It seems clear that there was no important restriction of free labour due to the growth of the slave trade. The artisan classes were not affected by the influx of captives, partly because the majority were drafted on to the villas which had become short of men through the tendency to crowd into the city, partly because the slave-population was not so useful in trade as in the private service of individuals who required docile and unscrupulous servants to aid their intrigues. The demand for slave labour was a product of the sudden increase of wealth and formed one aspect of the moral corruption that attended a prosperity too rapidly achieved. The vitality of the Roman Empire seems to indicate that the Roman character was not so deeply corrupted as it appeared to be during the last days of the Republic. It was not past reform when the right man appeared to achieve that reform. But it had clearly degenerated so far that it could no longer reform itself, and the vice which brought about that degeneration seems due to the fact that the Romans never succeeded in so developing the individual citizen that the majority could enjoy liberty without perverting it into licence.

## APPENDIX

## (a) CHRONOLOGY—

B.C. 753-510	Period of the Kings.
510	Establishment of the Republic.
450	The Roman Code (Ten Tables).
445	Right of intermarriage between the orders is recognised.
376-367	Licinian measures close the first struggle between the privileged aristocracy and the moneyed class.
366	First plebeian consul.
287	Plebs attain legislative independence.
264	War with Carthage; Romans defeated at Cannæ, 216; Carthaginians defeated at Zama, 202. Rome mistress of Italy.
133	The movement led by the Gracchi.
123-2	Tribunate of the second Gracchus; he overthrows for a time the power of the Senate.
88	Sulla and the conservative reaction.
63	Consulship of Cicero.
49	Civil War; Cæsar defeats Pompey.
44	Cæsar's assassination.
42	Battle of Philippi; end of the Republican party.
27	Foundation of the Principate.

(b) This sketch should be supplemented from the works by W. Warde Fowler, namely, *The City-State of the Greeks and Romans*; *Social Life at Rome in the Age of Cicero*, and *The Religious Experience of the Roman People*. The quotation is from Mommsen, i. 228. The chapters in Mommsen on the social life and literary interests of the different periods are always to be recommended. For a summary of the period see Acton, *History of Freedom and other Essays*.

(c) The following paragraph from Bluntschli, *Theory of the State* (2nd ed p 174), sums up the essential points about ancient slavery

"Aristotle (*Pol* i 4-6) has exercised much subtlety to prove that some men are masters by nature, others slaves by nature. But his argument, so far as it is true, only establishes the necessity of a class occupied in service, not of a slave class without rights. Doubtless the man of higher talents, if he is to fulfil his function, does require what Aristotle calls 'living instruments,' and doubtless there are men specially adapted by nature for bodily activity, who need the commanding guidance of a master if they are to fulfil their vocation. But this only proves that there is a mutual need which unites master and servant, master and journeyman, farmer and labourer, manufacturer and mechanic, it does not prove that the relation of the employed to the employer is to be compared to that of the domestic animals to their owners, nor that workmen must surrender individual freedom and human personality, and become mere things mere instruments of an appointed master—that is to say, become slaves. Man is by nature a person, he cannot become a thing that is, a slave. The Roman jurists in their theory of Law have applied the notion of property to slaves with a severity that was remarkable even in antiquity, representing them throughout as beings without rights, as mere things, but even they felt that slavery was against nature, and had only been introduced by the common usage of nations. They therefore explained manumission as the restoration of a natural right."

At one time slavery seems to have been an alternative for death after capture in battle, it then appeared to be a merciful provision, and the word for a slave (*servus*) was derived from *servatus*, this may in part account for the way in which the custom was defended to a very late time.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE ROMAN EMPIRE

§ I. THE idea of a world-empire was first realised by the Romans. As we look back on the years preceding the advent of Augustus, it is obvious that the creation of an Empire involved no sudden change in the life of the individual. Alexander had indeed failed to create such an imperial organisation as the Romans achieved, but his work had not been wasted, for he prepared the minds of men for the new situation. To Alexander the world owes the first effort toward a unification of its interests, and, as we have seen, if there was no territorial Empire during the last three centuries before Christ, there was at least a wide recognition of the advantages of unity in thought and free intercourse in trade. The history of the Roman conquests is a history of bloody wars, ruinous to commerce, and fatal to that sense of security which is essential to all progress. So the minds of men were prepared for the next development of history in both ways, having already acquired freedom from the narrowness of the City-State and a definite desire for the advantages of peace. Augustus had the ability to grasp the significance of the facts, and in the establishment of

his rule he observed as far as possible the principle of making constitutional changes unobtrusively and keeping before the eyes of men the other aspects of his rule. The man and the times were well suited to each other. In this, as in many succeeding centuries the best argument for imperialism is the demand for peace. The rule of Augustus, in reality a thinly veiled tyranny, was hailed in language that seems now unintelligible in its excesses. The new ruler is regarded primarily as a saviour, his kingdom is a restoration of the golden age, he is himself a god and the descendant of gods. Thus extravagant adulation was the product of very mixed sentiments. In part it was the genuine expression of gratitude for relief from the intolerable evils of preceding years. In part it was one more example of the decay of independence and the encroachment of Eastern ideas of monarchy. Augustus himself fostered the tendency and centred his efforts on the union of all interests in his own personality. In politics he posed as the first magistrate of the reorganised Roman world, and proceeded to conduct the affairs of his empire after the manner of a large landowner managing his estates. Outside of politics in this sense he aimed to impress the mixed multitudes under his control with a sense of their unity which, as he saw, was to be done mainly through their imaginations. He aimed at a unity of sentiment rather than a rigid political unity, and diverted the minds of men from the progress of his power by an elaborate revival of religious feeling skilfully directed toward himself as the real spiritual head of the Roman world. Here more than anywhere the conservative



element in the Roman nature came to his assistance. The king and the priest were united in old times, and the revival of that unity between Church and State was a good omen in an age already conscious of its moral degeneration. The great difference between this and all previous situations did not escape the notice of the shrewder observers; for the new head of the State was not only the high priest, but also the divinity, and hence long the crucial test of loyalty to the emperor would be the acknowledgment of his absolute power.

§ 2. In one respect the new power was essentially opposed to the previous political order. The emperor did not wish to be controlled by the Senate, and from the first there was a division between the imperial and the aristocratic interests. This want of unity in the higher circles quickly made itself apparent. Some of the senators were willing to cringe before the new rulers, others distinguished themselves by a proud independence. But in either case their loss of prestige was made clear by the rise of a new class fostered by the policy of the emperors. This was the class of freedmen who now begin to be of importance in the political sphere. The freedman was not altogether a novelty: under the Republic we hear of slaves who held positions of trust, and were the confidential advisers of their masters, being trusted with private business or the management of country estates. But under the Empire their position changes in a way that really constitutes the most important social development of the era. The cause of the change is to be found principally in the policy of the emperors,

who preferred to use their own devoted agents rather than men of independent position in the State, and also in the economic relations of the classes in the Empire. To the former cause is due the official importance of many freedmen at this time, which necessarily affected the general estimate of the whole class. But the second cause was the more important in reality, for it was operative on a wider scale. The Roman noble was like the later feudal noble in regarding trade as beneath his dignity, and being at the same time unable to support that pomp and dignity which the times required. The slave, once free from his obligations to his master, was able to devote himself to any lucrative occupation, and so inevitably acquired the power that money brings. In many cases wealth was obtained by the basest means, but the catalogue of crimes laid to the charge of the freedmen must not prevent the recognition of other facts, such as the growth of ordinary industries and the increased demand for imported and manufactured articles. Rome had passed the stage when agriculture was the chief occupation of man, society had evolved to the point where class distinctions are identified with occupations, if the nobility was not willing to be a nation of shopkeepers, the work must be done by others, and the nobility of rank compete with the nobility of wealth. In spite of the scorn which the satirists of this period pour on the vulgar upstarts, the empire was destined to see one of those periods of evolution which go to prove that the degradation of labour brings its own revenge. By the employment of slaves the ruling caste had definitely branded production as beneath

the dignity of the trueborn Roman ; by the establishment of peace the Empire gave a new impetus to trade while, apart from official positions it gave no occupation to its aristocracy ; there was no solution of the dilemma, except the normal process of development which transfers the real power to those who adapt themselves to the new conditions. The freedmen stepped into the breach thus created, and formed the required industrial class, while some of the nobles compromised sufficiently to enter upon financial schemes indirectly. The legislation of the emperors shows very clearly that there was at this time no grasp of economic principles. The Republic, for example, gave free play to the co-operative spirit of the various trades, but the early emperors saw in the formation of societies, collegia, and guilds a source of danger to their own power. The edicts against such societies ended by disorganising the trades that depended on them, and it was necessary to adopt the opposite policy, and make the various guilds compulsory unions under the direct control of the State. As at first there was a defective sense of the value of spontaneous union, so in the later phase the legislation shows the mistake of supposing that the benefits of co-operation could be obtained by an organisation that forced individuals to remain in stereotyped groups. The public good which was served by the voluntary unions was not equally advanced by these artificial methods. A similar evolution was seen in the case of the rural occupations. The economic results of concentration in cities were so serious that it was necessary to stimulate by artificial means the agricultural interests. The plan which

was followed virtually amounted to creating a class of serfs. The decrease in the number of slaves was accompanied by a decrease in the amount of land under cultivation, as the free population tended to desert the country. The Government then undertook to restore the ancient *latifundia* by binding the labourer to the farm and so creating that system of landed aristocracy with a serf population which was to be a marked feature of later periods.

The ultimate failure of the Roman municipal system is in some respects the most deplorable feature of this period. The *pax Romana* was naturally the time when commercial intercourse could flourish on a large scale, but in the end the very size of the area proved ruinous. The imperial centre ceased to be an effective centre, and the larger provincial towns became rival centres of commerce and culture. We cannot overlook the good features of this movement, the way in which it seems to have inspired individual enterprise, the lavish expenditure of money by rich citizens on their native towns or adopted homes. But the enterprise was not based on good judgment or sound views, the tendency to mere display grew apace, the public shows absorbed enormous sums, and the worst features of a shallow civilisation were soon apparent. The vices of the age seemed to thrive most in these smaller centres. The public taste was pampered and depraved by the shows which owed their popularity to a morbid desire for excitement, especially the combats between men or animals or both.

§ 3. Against the increase of these vices there was at this time an increasing protest from the better class

of citizens, and especially from those who were the teachers of the age. Under the Empire the schools of Hellenism still held sway. The Stoic and Epicurean doctrines had already lost the few points by which they could be sharply distinguished, and stood forth as the formulæ of life which appealed to different temperaments. Some felt that the secret of happiness lay in a cultivation of the emotions under the control of reason; others, of sterner fibre, asserted that the formula of the good life was harmony with nature, a life of reason moderated by the indulgence of those feelings which reason could approve. In either case the particular philosophy was essentially a way of life, a practical philosophy in the narrow sense. So we find a man like Mæcenas or Horace professing the Epicurean persuasion, enlisting under the banner of a leader who might be made the patron saint of culture and refinement, a new cyrenaicism purged of its crudities, and exhibiting the mellow toleration of age and indifference. On the other side are ranged the more severe types, the spirits that in later times were to have their counterparts in monks and Puritans. But it would be difficult to draw any clear line of distinction, to measure, for example, the exact degree to which Seneca's gentle way of life was truly Stoic, and not essentially Epicurean in its flavour. All ages of reflection seem to produce this kind of antithesis, the eternal opposition between those who look upon the world as a place of opportunities where a man should make the most of his chances, and those who see in it only a temporary theatre of action where the true hero works out his destiny till the curtain falls. In

the daily round of life both types are to be found and often the characteristics are mingled but in the more precise region of theory there is rarely any doubt as to which type is to be encouraged. The dangers of the Epicurean view lie too much in the direction to which our natures also tend. Stoicism has the virtue of pulling against the forces which lead to increased laxity as Aristotle noted the people who suffer from defective love of pleasure are few and the moralist usually feels that they do not require his ministry. We can understand from this why there was such an overwhelming preponderance of Stoic teaching under the Empire. There are no names of Epicurean teachers to set over against Seneca and Marcus Aurelius for the age demanded some strong antidote to the poison of its material prosperity and its natural passions it demanded not only a way of life but a way of salvation and its need was the opportunity of the preacher. To the Stoic belongs the credit of undertaking a definite moral propaganda and turning the dialectic of the earlier school into the rhetoric of the preacher. In a history of philosophy this is naturally regarded as a period of decline but if we look at it from the standpoint of the moralist the period is marked with a greatness of its own. The change from academic detail to missionary enterprise was really brought about by Cicero a person eminently fitted to adapt a philosophic doctrine in the interests of an imperial organisation. In the rhetorical descriptions of Cicero we see the transition from theory to practice from disputes about the use of terms to the direct personal question of character. For Cicero the Epi

curean is ever drinking wine upon a bed of roses, while the Stoic spurns delights and lives laborious days. After that exposition the average man, asked to choose which he will call his ideal, hastily votes for the Stoic, and our pleader wins his verdict. From Cicero came the terminology that dominated the writers of the Empire, and became also the philosophical language of the Latin Fathers, so that it will be well to consider for a moment the main features of Cicero's eclectic philosophy. On the question of certainty or the possibility of absolute knowledge, Cicero was inclined to follow the lead of the sceptical thinkers, and believe that the guide of life was probability. But the instinct of the politician entirely overrules this tendency when the question becomes one of practice pure and simple. Here Cicero relies upon the Stoic doctrine of universal reason, and evolves from it doctrines of great significance. For since the reason is immanent in all at all times, its dictates are law universal, a conscience that all possess, the God in us. Thus the Stoic Reason is interpreted as inner knowledge of guilt, and the word conscience passes into the literary language of the West. The higher interpretation of the idea was not undertaken by Cicero. His ethical work was never properly creative, and he confined himself to making Latin versions of the middle Stoic teaching. From the doctrine of universal reason he turns to a very formal exposition of duties, strongly political in its character, and altogether confined within the limits of the civic idea that obedience is for the majority a sure guide to right living, and only the superior man, the Stoic Wise

Man, is able to rise above the level of habitual goodness to that of real virtue. In spite of its limitations the basis of this doctrine was broad and others could build upon it. In Seneca and in Marcus Aurelius we have the superstructure. With the continual encroachment of the imperial administration upon the life of the individual the virile tone is moderated in that of reflective sadness. Cicero addresses himself to the whole inhabited world as one that directs and commands. Marcus Aurelius though an emperor, writes "to himself" and exhorts rather than directs. In that last phase we see the extreme limit of the pagan development, where its first strong intellectual confidence dies away in self surrender to the mystery of life.

. § 4 From philosophy to religion is at this period no long stride. The temper that produced the evolution of the Stoic philosophy ran to extravagance in other directions. Mysticism of the worst kind took upon itself the name of Pythagoras (as its particular patron saint), and the most notorious impostors in all history found an opportunity in the credulity of the age. With this Neo-Pythagorism is associated Neo-Platonism, though not altogether justly. The founder of Neo Platonism Plotinus, must take rank as one of the great philosophers of antiquity, but we are not concerned so much with the founder or his system as with the public appreciation of the doctrine, and for the disciples the value of that doctrine was not in its strong features but in its weaker points its speculation on the One and the unity of the individual with that One. The logic and the psychology of



Plotinus were largely ignored, but the mystical possibilities of the doctrine were eagerly seized upon and developed because the minds of men were wholly turned in that direction. It was then, as it is now, the theosophical interest that could be cultivated by the imagination at the expense of the intellect, and undisciplined minds ran riot in groundless speculations adorned with the phrases of really great teachers.

The vices and the virtues of men are both alike to be taken as symptoms of their tendencies. Philosophy lost its power of balanced criticism, and religion lost its purity, because there was no longer a clue to the meaning of life; existence had become a riddle to which only the initiated priest or the oracular prophet knew the solution; the way of life was no longer itself a way of salvation, and man had to choose between being worldly or other-worldly. Clearly the time was fulfilled for that reunion of life and spirit which we recognise as the specific work of Christianity. We cannot find in the external form of Christianity any features that would explain its final conquest over paganism. The preparation of the world had been in many respects very complete; the sphere of religion was the whole inhabited world, the idea of religion was highly refined, and involved the ideas of mediation, propitiation, sacramental union with God, and spiritual purification. The student of the Oriental cults finds himself at first bewildered by the apparent absolute truth of the statement that Christianity came not to destroy but to fulfil. The great movement began without a sign of revolution. The first disciples could not foresee the future of their religion, and lived under the suspense

of their belief in the approaching end of the world. Time changed their outlook, the Christian began to grasp the significance of the phrase, "The kingdom of heaven is within you." By that time the first desperate struggle for life against the Neronian persecution was over, the reign of Anti-Christ ended, but the world still continued as of old. The zeal that had welcomed death now found a new outlet in the work of converting the world. By the time of the Antonines the Church was fully evolved, and began to enjoy what has been called the minor peace of the Church, in contrast with the second, major peace under Constantine. During this period of quiet growth we see the Christian temper forming itself, and an understanding of that temper will do more than anything to give us a correct appreciation of the vital character of Christianity, free as yet from dogmatic formulæ, or the later confusion of religious and political interests.

The Stoic teaching had many isolated features that were akin to Christian beliefs. The Epicureans too were in many cases not far from the kingdom of God, especially when their ideas were centred upon the more æsthetic side of life, and their feeling for the beauty of the natural world was associated with natural refinement. And so, as the pagan world presents us with a movement toward humanism in its two great features, the love of nature and art combined with a sense of the dignity of man, the early expansion of Christianity shows us a relaxation of the first stern rejection of the world and a new sense of the richness of the earthly life. This phase, too often neglected,

has been very beautifully portrayed by Walter Pater in his book, *Marius the Epicurean*, and his description of the early Christian life, as it might have been regarded by an Epicurean in the days of Marcus Aurelius, deserves to be quoted. Marius tries to find the secret of the spell which the Christian household of Cecilia exerts over him, "And what he found, thus looking as it were for the dead among the living, was the vision of a natural, a scrupulously natural, love: transforming, by some new finesse of insight into the truth of human relationships, and under the urgency of some new motive by him so far unfathomable, all the conditions of life. He saw in all its primitive freshness and amid the lively facts of its actual coming into the world, as a reality of experience, that regenerate type of humanity which, centuries later, Giotto and his successors, down to the best and purest days of the young Raffæle, working under conditions very friendly to the imagination, were to conceive as an artistic ideal. He felt there, felt amid the stirring of some wonderful hope within himself, the genius, the unique power of Christianity; in exercise then, as it has been exercised ever since, in spite of many hindrances and under the most inopportune circumstances. Chastity—he seemed to understand—the chastity of men and women, with all the conditions and results proper to that chastity, is the most beautiful thing in the world, and the truest conservation of the creative energy by which men and women were first brought into it. The nature of the family, for which the better genius of old Rome itself had so sincerely cared, of the family and its appropriate affections—

all that love of one's kindred by which obviously one does triumph in some degree over death—had never been so felt before. Here, surely! in its nest like peace and warmth, its jealous exclusion of all that was against itself and its own immaculate naturalness, in the hedge set around the sacred thing on every side, this re-institution of the family did but carry forward, and give effect to, the purposes, the kindness of nature itself, friendly to man, at all those points, more especially where it involved (by way of due recognition of some unfathomed divine condescension in a certain fact or series of facts) pity, and a willing sacrifice of oneself, for the weak for children and the aged, for the dead even. And then, for its constant outward token, its significant manner of index it issued in a debonair grace and some mystic attractiveness—a courtesy which made Marius doubt whether, after all, that famed Greek gaiety or blytheness in the handling of life had been so great a success. In contrast with the incurable insipidity even of what was most exquisite in the higher Roman life and still truest to the old primitive soul of goodness amid its evil, this new creation he saw (a fair picture beyond the skill of any master of old pagan beauty) had indeed the appropriate freshness of 'the bride adorned for her husband'. And still its grace was no mere simplicity. Things, new and old seemed to be coming as if out of some goodly treasure-house, the brain full of science, and the heart rich with various sentiment possessing withal this surprising healthfulness, this *reality* of heart."

To quote more of this exquisitely sympathetic

sketch would encroach too much on our space, but this extract will perhaps be enough to emphasise a view of early Christianity which is still at times thrust into the background. For history has been more occupied with the other aspects, the monastic severity, the dogmatic formulæ, and finally the political career of the Church. Monasticism began its course very early, and was rooted in the deepest feelings of the early Christians. The idea that it was an importation from the East may be rejected as false, but it remains true that the results exhibited all the defects of the Eastern tendencies toward a negative spiritualism. In certain points early Christian thought was defective in its valuation of human life; the necessity for complete devotion to God seemed to demand a degree of separation from the world that was bad for the individual and the world alike. We are compelled to judge these tendencies by their outcome, however little the first beginnings were meant to have such endings; we know them in their entirety by their fruits. The new emphasis on chastity degenerated into an opposition to the state of marriage, a disproportionate praise of celibacy, and a morbid antipathy to the flesh and its lusts, producing a type of unworldliness which was finally only the vice of spiritual pride. Men fled into desert places and refused to look upon their fellowmen or upon their own bodies; godliness began as a protest against luxury and fine raiment, and ended by being irreconcilable with decency and cleanliness; the Christians competed with the pagans in feats of useless endurance or prolonged fasting to prove their victory over the

flesh; the world became full of a new type of 'saint' whose life was a useless round of self-torture supposed to be pleasing to God, and supported by tales of miracles and visions that originated from physical exhaustion and the consequent mental derangements.

But these were extremes, and the more natural feelings soon triumphed over the abnormal. In place of the anchoritic we find the cœnobitic plan of life, and this is the genuine root of monasticism which, when fully organised was a way of life that combined usefulness and holiness work and prayer. Yet the monastic institution must always remain a protest against the world, and an assertion of the superiority of one type of life over another, the great monastic leaders sometimes openly and always tacitly denounced the growing secular powers of the Church and maintained that distinction between the life of the saint and the life of the ordinary good man which recalls the Stoic doctrine of a "twofold morality."

§ 5 The Church accepted from the first this dualism of ideals. The recluse was neither in the world nor of the world, but the Church felt the necessity of being in the world though not of it. The growing self-consciousness of the Church showed itself in two ways especially, in the formation of doctrine and the assertion of autonomy. To understand these points the character of Judaism must be taken into account. For the root of the Christian doctrine was the Mosaic law which was fulfilled and not destroyed by Christ, and that law was the expression of a theocratic spirit quite distinct from the Hellenic type. The foundation of Jewish morality was the law, not reason, the

sanctions of morality were the rewards and punishment which were incurred by sin, and were justly meted out because there was a covenant between God and His people which was broken by transgression. The Hellenic tradition lacked entirely this personal note: the penalties of wrongdoing were more akin to natural results, the evildoer was foolish rather than vicious, and the religious background of this moral doctrine was the product of reflection rather than revelation. Judaism, grounded in a historical revelation and on the laws of Moses, tended to be too legal, too anxious to guide all action by the interpretation of law, and so to become reliant on the professional interpreters of the law. At the same time the consciousness of direct responsibility to God made it impossible to acknowledge any other ruler except as a force maintaining order and so making it possible to fulfil the law of God. Christianity was primarily the assertion of the spirit over the law; as it has been frequently said, the idea of *being* good was now added to that of *doing* good. But the Judaic principles were not so much superseded as included in a doctrine of wider scope, and if the direct influence and example of Christ was sufficient at first, the Church as it expanded came under the necessity of filling out its formal principles with detailed rules of conduct. Its progress in this direction led to definite moral and political teaching. On the political side the doctrine of obedience to the temporal powers seemed to be stated clearly by Paul, but the limits of this obedience were not fixed. The alliance of the imperial and the Christian interests by Constantine was a source of danger, since the secular power was

likely to assume the control in spiritual affairs and make religion merely a department of the State. Against this Ambrose made an early and vigorous protest. He declared that "in a matter of faith bishops are wont to judge emperors, not emperors bishops." So began the great struggle which ultimately became the struggle between Pope and Emperor Church and State. During the period which ends with Augustine the issue was clear, the demand for autonomy was confined to strictly spiritual questions and the supremacy of the temporal ruler in affairs of State was not disputed, when, at a later time, the Church became the owner of so much land that its power was territorial as well as spiritual the struggle really became an opposition between two temporal powers.

§ 6 While the political attitude of the Church was thus becoming definite, its ethical and intellectual basis was being constructed. The simple faith of the disciples required to be supplemented by regulations about the beliefs of Christians, which amounted to the formation of dogma. This was the work of the Fathers and the first great synthesis was achieved by Augustine. The expansion of Christian thought was attended with great opposition, as the source of many ideas was found in the pagan writings, and some Christians felt acutely the danger of admitting any pagan notions. Broadly speaking, the Latin writers were hostile to pagan thought while the Greek school, nourished in the eclectic atmosphere of Alexandria, were inclined to embody the Greek philosophy in their teachings, and made it an integral part of Christian



training. The work of Clement and Origen is especially interesting because it is typical of one phase of religious development. Some great religious teachers lay emphasis exclusively on faith, and tend to depreciate knowledge; others see in the work of the intellect the surest guarantee of an increasingly adequate knowledge of God. The problem which confronted the Alexandrian fathers was that of maintaining the Christian principles against the searching criticisms of the learned, and to them is due the union of faith and knowledge. The Church never really lost sight of their work, even when after the barbarian invasions the tide turned against the intellectualists and the leaders of the Church discouraged all secular knowledge.

In Augustine's theology there is evident proof of the two influences which were uniting to form the doctrine of the Western Church. In the sphere of ethics as doctrine of virtues, it is no less apparent. The essence of the new position is the creation of a scale of virtues which shall include and complete that of the Greek thinkers. The four cardinal virtues remain, but faith, hope, and charity or love, are added to them, and of these the greatest is love. At this stage the Christian literature seems rounded off in a complete exposition of the true way of life, preserving the excellences of the Greek views along with the deeper and broader spirituality of the new revelation. The conversion of the world was yet to come, but already some signs were visible; the Christians felt the need of reform to a certain extent, though their sense of wrong was relative to the level of the times. Under

Constantine some social reforms were attempted, slavery, already condemned by some Stoics was further alleviated though not absolutely condemned by the Church, the sanctity of the family relations was restored by the idea of the fatherhood of God and the position of women was improved by the recognition which the Church gave them as independent workers. But many things were tolerated at that time which we should have expected the Church to condemn unhesitatingly. To legislate for the spiritual welfare of a world still tentatively feeling its way toward a new kind of life was a tremendous task, the leaders of thought were not wholly emancipated themselves and the pressure of expediency was great. Only the misguided enthusiast who thinks the whole truth is revealed to one man or to one age, will expect perfection, the historian will not be surprised to learn that the Church declined to accept emancipated slaves as preachers, or to assist them when they tried to escape, that Augustine himself was doubtful whether prostitution was not to be tolerated as a preventive against greater evils, and so pious a woman as his mother, Monica, seems to have seen no wrong in the act of turning away the mistress of Augustine that he might contract a lawful marriage with a more suitable woman. The changes in the moral sentiments of mankind which make these ideas strange to us, were to be accomplished only by centuries of progress.

## APPENDIX

## (a) CHRONOLOGY—

- A.D. 14 . . Death of Augustus Cæsar.  
 65 . . Seneca died. [Reign of Nero; persecution of the Christians.]  
 70 . . Fall of Jerusalem.  
 89 . . Epictetus teaching.  
 161-180 . Marcus Aurelius, Emperor.  
 204 . . Plotinus born; teaches at Rome, 244, after which his works were composed.  
 217-(?) . Clement of Alexandria died; the School of Christian Platonists at Alexandria constructs a Christian philosophy.  
 185-254 . Origen.  
 249-251 . Decius, Emperor; second period of active opposition to Christianity.  
 306-337 . Constantine the Great. (Sole Emperor, 323.)  
 312 . . Toleration of the Church. [Edict of Milan, 313; recognises Christianity as a legitimate religion.]  
 374-397 . Ambrose, Bishop of Milan.  
 375-395 . Theodosius, Emperor.  
 396-430 . Augustine, Bishop of Hippo.  
 410 . . Capture and sack of Rome by Goths (Alaric).

(b) The material for this period is plentiful. For the economic aspects see Cunningham, *Western Civilisation*.

For the moral life, Lecky's *History of European Morals* is instructive; philosophy and social conditions are excellently treated in Dill's *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*; also the continuation of that work in his *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire*;

the chief authority is Friedlander, *Roman Life and Manners under the Early Empire*

(c) No attempt is made here to develop the teaching of the philosophers, the character of the work done is well indicated by the title and contents of Dill's chapter on "The Philosophic Missionary" Some mention might have been made of the Neo Platonic opposition to Christianity, but in spirit Neo-Platonism hardly belongs to Western thought, its influence, through the Alexandrian schools is seen in *Christian Gnosticism* and in *Mysticism* from Dionysius the Areopagite" (writings probably first known in fifth century) to the fifteenth century Augustine is also strongly Neo Platonic The emphasis usually laid on Stoicism in this period is much exaggerated An excellent brief sketch of the period is given by Bigg, *The Church's Task under the Roman Empire* I quote from that work (p. xii) the following very just estimate — "If we look at the great Stoic doctors we shall find in them an admirable account of duty, so admirable indeed that it was largely adopted by Christian teachers The Stoic set a very high value on the individual soul its wisdom, its purity, its freedom He preached even self-denial, in the sense of self limitation, or renunciation of all that turns a man away from the pursuit of a high ideal He taught courage also and the endurance of suffering, so long as it did not appear to the man himself to be irremediable or excessive, otherwise he held that suicide was right But attention has been directed in one of the following lectures to the harsh contempt with which Epictetus speaks of women and children It would hardly have been fair to do so if this scorn had been a personal trait belonging to Epictetus himself But it is not so, it flows quite naturally from his system Epictetus did not like women and children, because they bored him, and he did not see why he should be bored These weaker vessels take from the wise man and give nothing in return They are a clog upon one who pursues inner perfection and tranquillity It never for a moment occurred to Epictetus that man becomes better not by self cultivation but by making others

better, or, in other words, that the voluntary suffering of the good lifts up the bad and makes the good better than he was.

The Platonists were much more humane, and allowed much more scope for the natural affections, which always entail more or less of self-sacrifice. They did not regard the world as an enemy to be kept at bay; it was in their opinion a place of discipline and for this reason they shrank from suicide. They offered to mankind all that idealism has to teach. Even Hegel adds nothing substantial to Plotinus, and their system of doctrine was so like that of the Church that it has been doubted, not without reason, whether Dionysius the Areopagite and Synesius of Cyrene were at bottom anything more than Neoplatonists."

(d) Several ideas, very important in later times, play a great part in the life of this period. The question of religious liberty first becomes important during the Neronian persecutions. I may quote here the excellent account of Ruffini, *Religious Liberty*; he says (p. 18): "One would search in vain in the literature of Greece or Rome for any trace of the idea of religious liberty": religion was in those times national and free from dogma; Greek (Socrates, e.g.) and Roman cases of "persecution" are really political, it is not a "heresy" but a "conspiracy" that the Roman attacks: but political repression did actually affect the right to believe, and this was asserted as an individual right against any political interference; the paradox is in the fact that the demand for liberty of conscience "finds itself on the same side as religious intolerance"; the Church was liberal in its views for a long period, but by the time of Augustine tolerance is given up: the Church takes as its motto "Compel them to come in," and justifies coercion by the decision that liberty of error is the death of the soul. Thus heretics and pagans are subject to compulsion; and it is the pagan who urges tolerance. Here begins the terrible religious zeal that at last animated the Inquisition.

Another theme of great interest in this period is Spiritualism. Corrupt morality is not merely a loss of control over

passions ; it is also a loss of control over reason ; and so tends to foster a reverence for the irrational Faith in spirits, dreams, incantations, and impostors marks the decline of balanced thought Alexander Abonoteichos is the best known case of imposture , a brilliant description of him is given by Froude, *Short Studies*, " A Cagliostro of the Second Century "

(e) The public morality of this period is especially interesting, as it is possible to see with considerable clearness the relation between the individual and the social system This is well illustrated by the following quotations from C R L Fletcher, *Making of Western Europe*, vol 1 p 34 — " When we turn to consider the moral barrenness of non-Christian society in these centuries, we must always remember the terrible example set by the capital cities of Rome and Constantinople Demagogues had inaugurated in the second century before Christ a vast system of State Socialism, which fed the unemployed of Rome at the expense of the industrious in the provinces This horrible system went on with increasing velocity and at increasing cost First the unemployed were allowed to purchase corn below cost price , next, they received it free , then it was ready-made into bread for them , then pork wine, and oil were added , worst of all, free admission to the arena was granted to this same class, whose low ideals naturally set the tone of theatrical exhibitions Beyond bloodshed in great floods, the Roman mob found gross indecency to be the main attraction of the theatre In the third century A D , one hundred and seventy-five days in each year were devoted at Rome to shows of one kind or another The example of the capital was inevitably followed in other great cities When Constantine made Byzantium the Eastern Capital, and renamed it after himself, he had to treat its mob as the Roman mob was treated I have purposely called this a moral and not an economic disease, for there can be no morality where there is no incentive to labour Industrial provincials lost all faith in justice when they knew that the fruits of their labour went to maintain that kind of thing This course of action of

the Roman State and its results are surely not without warning for European states, and especially for Great Britain at the present day."

P. 31—*Decline of the Yeomanry.*—"From 289 A.D. onwards there was, first at intervals of five, and soon at intervals of fifteen years, a fresh estimate of the amount demandable, and as a rule the demand was increased just in proportion as the number of contributory units fell. The result was that the middling landowners, the backbone of the Empire, were simply crushed out of existence. The senatorial class no doubt profited to some extent by this ruin of those immediately below them, for the absorption of the smaller landowners by the greater was a marked feature of the fourth and fifth centuries. A form of tenure grew up, without the sanction of the law, and gradually acquiring the powerful sanction of custom, called the *Precarium* or the *Patrocinium*. I surrendered my land to some powerful man, but continued to cultivate it and pay him a rent for it; and, in return, he got me off the taxes. Even if he were not himself legally exempt, he was in a position to make a better bargain with the collector than I was. He could bribe or browbeat the judges and officials; one humorous orator of the fourth century suggests that no judge should be allowed to go out to dinner. Whole villages were thus "taken into patronage," and so more and more burdens were thrown on those who remained free. After the triumph of the Church her lands escaped with very light taxes, and she extended her "patronage" freely, the Crown itself sinned against itself (for its domains were exempt) by taking people into patronage.

P. 32—*Slaves and hired Labourers.*—"This decrease of slavery was merely a symptom of the universal ruin impending over the well-to-do. Men were no longer able to purchase more, or even to feed the slaves they had. Emancipation set in with a rush. The great gangs of slaves who had worked the great senatorial estates as stockmen and shepherds began to disappear from Italy, Gaul, and Spain. In the East the change was less marked,

because there were fewer large and more small properties. One curious result of this change will be with us throughout the whole of mediæval, and far into modern history. In order to get their large estates cultivated, landowners began to make contracts with their poorer neighbours or even their own emancipated slaves, these should till the land and pay as rent a proportion of the produce, or pay rent in labour on some portion of the land, and take the produce of some other portion for themselves. Such men were called *coloni*, and out of the colonate grew the system of serfdom and of that double ownership of land which underlay so much of mediæval life. It was probably only this colonate which saved Western Europe from going out of cultivation altogether in the fifth century, very frequently barbarian settlers called *inquilini*, from outside the Empire, were invited to come in and till the land upon similar terms. The Government, always anxious to make sure of its taxes, showed itself, from the fourth century at least, and in some cases as early as the third, anxious to extend the colonate, it even distributed waste or ruined lands among the neighbouring owners, and compelled these to settle them and till them. Its own "plantations" of veteran soldiers upon frontier lands were very laudably conceived but were not an economic success, such men probably lacked special agricultural knowledge and their produce was undersold, or their estates bought up by richer men. Thus, though there was some hope for the future in the system of the colonate, for the present mere economic ruin hung over the whole western portion of the Empire.

P 90—*Monastic Ideals*—"And far away in a hermit's cell at Bethlehem another 'Father of the Latin Church,' St Jerome, is elaborating, for Greeks and Latins alike another set of rules of life which, he little foresees, will set the Augustinian theology in the shade for a thousand years to come. While Jerome, the first scholar of the age, and the only one who knew Hebrew, is translating for the Catholic Church of Rome the Bible into the text which the Church still uses and which we call 'the Vulgate,' he is also preaching, to a world all too



ready to listen, the practice of celibacy as the highest ideal. His writings will be the foundation stone of monastic life in the West a century later. That life, some form of which has been dear to the Eastern mind in all ages from the days of Elijah to the fakirs of modern India, was already immensely popular in the Egyptian desert. Christian Monasticism had not originally been either Greek or Latin, but Coptic, *i.e.* native Egyptian, though it is just possible that a few Greek and Latin fugitives from the persecutions of 303-313 had joined it. It is to women and clergy, and especially to fugitives who may have lost their wealth in the wars, that Jerome preached this disastrous ideal. He also preaches up the value of relics, of pilgrimages, of prayers to the saints; and one is sorry to observe that he is for persecuting the very sensible Greek Bishops who object to such things. Jerome is perhaps the first person to apply the Old Testament denunciations of the Amalekites to his Christian brothers when they do not agree with him. Thus in him is already born the spirit of the mediæval papacy."

PART II  
FROM THE ANCIENT TO  
THE MODERN TIMES

## CHAPTER IX

### SOME ASPECTS OF THE MIDDLE AGES

§ 1 IN the fifth century the Roman Empire in the West collapsed before the attack of those whom a classical historian would call barbarians. At the end of the century Italy was occupied by Goths, Spain and Gaul were in the hands of the Suevi, the Visigoths and the Burgundians. These names are sufficient to suggest the changed state of Europe but in estimating the significance of these changes some allowance must be made for previous conditions. The Roman Empire had subsisted for nearly two centuries on a basis of compromise. In many cases districts were held by provincial rulers over whom the Emperor had only a nominal control, and over the whole of Europe, from the Alps to the western shore of Gaul, the failing power of Rome had produced a great decline in the superficial control of the provincials, while the Roman army was so continually recruited from provincial sources that it finally lost all distinctive character. From this wreck of Empire arose a new power, the Kingdom of the Franks. Beginning in A.D. 486 with the ambitions of Clovis, this Kingdom grew finally into the empire of Charle-

magne. Within the empire there was no unity except what was derived from the genius of Charlemagne. His successors from 814 to 936 were inadequate to the task of maintaining an efficient hold over the various parts of the empire, and the rule of the Franks subsided into petty kingship. In 936 the Saxon Otto I. drove back the Hungarians who had overrun Italy, Germany and France. The Empire was restored under his strong rule, and remained established for eight centuries. During the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries the outstanding feature is the struggle with the Papacy, which reaches a climax in 1250, when the Papacy secured a ruinous victory over Frederic II. By that time new forces had come into the field; so that, as we look back from the close of the thirteenth century, nothing is more obvious than the extent to which Emperor and Pope alike were ultimately to succumb to the development of the people.

During this period, from the eighth to the thirteenth century, there might seem at first sight to be little of interest in the sphere of ethics or politics. So far as literature is concerned there is indeed little of first-rate importance. But, if we take account of the processes by which public morality is formed, and look particularly to those activities which express and also form human character, there is no period more instructive or more complex. To understand subsequent theories it is necessary to grasp at least some of the main features of this practical construction of ideals. We shall attempt therefore to indicate some of those features, grouping them roughly, under the heads of legal, religious, economic and social developments.

§ 2 The rise of Teutonic power created at once a new atmosphere. The new rulers of the West belonged to peoples devoid of culture or refinement, and therefore devoid of those subtle distinctions which an old civilisation always creates. At first the ruler is fitted for his position only by personal qualities, he is the leader whom men choose to follow, and he is consequently utterly dependent upon the will of his people. Neither among Greeks nor Romans had there been rulers of this type, though the will of the people was the theoretical basis of ancient government, and the later emperors were often proclaimed by their own soldiery, there is only the most superficial resemblance between them and the Teutonic chiefs. In Greek and Roman political life there was always the idea of the State to come between ruler and ruled, in the first days of the Teutonic rule there is no trace of this, the relation of ruler and ruled is directly personal.

This novelty is the source of the virtues and vices of the period. So soon as the Teutonic leaders began to conquer new territory they divided it up among their followers, some degree of inequality was not to be avoided and under the lax rule of the Kings who succeeded Clovis this was rapidly increased. Around the Franks settled in Gaul there was already an example of distinctions due to civil rank or wealth, for the Romanised Gauls remained and preserved the Roman provincial system. In a very short time the Franks ceased to act as a body in electing their King, a few gained supremacy over the others by the acquisition of land and by opportunities of influencing the

King. A landed aristocracy thus came into existence ; wealth accumulated in the hands of a few and, naturally, power and rank were joined to material wealth. Such distinctions must inevitably arise as an effect of freedom. Wherever men enter into competition on the basis of personal qualities, a natural gradation is quickly made. But the step which is usually taken next is to secure for one's posterity what has been gained. This again is no more than the exercise of forethought, and a sense of responsibility for one's own kin. Yet there has never been a more fruitful source of corruption than hereditary titles and positions ; for the control of others has too often descended by right of birth to those who had never learned to control themselves. The nobility of Europe, sprung from the landed aristocracy of Clovis, conferred in its time great harm and great benefit on Europe. As we consider later the oppression and greed of the nobles it will be necessary to remember that to them is due also some of the ideals of loyalty and high breeding which have done more than anything else to elevate the standard of common morality.

Beside the aristocracy thus formed there were two other classes or estates, the freemen and those who were for any reason deprived of freedom. It was often difficult to find anything more than a technical distinction between these lower classes. The nobles lived largely by plunder ; trade was a disgrace to them, and they regarded the citizens who lived by trade with contempt ; as they could take what they wanted they had no respect for the toilers who produced what they stole. An age of lawless plunder has no room for a

middle class, and for all practical purposes those who were not attached to the retinue of a noble were equally subject to his tyranny. Technically there was a recognised difference between the freeman and the villain, the latter being simply the possession of his lord in the sense in which cattle are owned by their purchaser.

§ 3 There is nothing to be said in defence of such a social system, the advantages which partly excuse the slavery recognised in Greece and Rome were conspicuous by their absence. In fact, the phrase "social system" is itself inadmissible. At this time there seems to have been no sense of the unity which every society requires, there was no concept of a state which every man served, the nobles fought and struggled with each other, regardless of a common good and careless of everything except the oath by which the lord and his followers were bound together.

A little reflection upon these facts will show the significance of the idea of Empire. Some power was required to create common interests and reduce to unity the various nations that were at present merely coexisting. The first requisite was a common law, for each nation still retained its own traditions, and Agobard could say that "one might see five men sitting together each amenable to a different law." These tribal laws were very crude. For the most part they were confined to estimates of the penalties to be exacted for theft, assault, and murder. The Salic Code compiled under Clovis about 500 A.D. is a typical piece of Teutonic legislation. The most significant provision of the Teutonic law was that of *weregild* or penalty for homicide. Murder was not a capital

offence in most codes, probably because the tribe "would have thought the loss of one citizen ill repaired by that of another"; in place of execution the penalty of a fine was inflicted, and the different classes of men were distinguished by the difference in the cost of killing them. There could not be a better illustration of the way in which murder was regarded not as a crime, but as a deplorable loss; for where murder is regarded as a crime there can be no question of distinction in the price of the dead.

As the Teutons did not impose their laws in the conquered areas, Roman law survived beside the new ideas of justice. A process of modification naturally went on, but the history of this interaction is comparatively unimportant because in actual life law ceased to be important. Charlemagne succeeded in keeping a judicial administration which at least professed to be expert and specialised. Before his time justice was merely the correction of offence by the community to which the offender belonged. Ten families constituted a group under a magistrate; the next highest authority was the magistrate of the Hundred; while the local lord, the count, exercised supreme jurisdiction. Imagination fails to picture the scenes in such courts, the fierce disputes of witnesses, the assertions and denials of customs, the appeal to the memory of the elders or the mysterious law-book. Behind this settlement of disputes there was no learning, no philosophy, no such recorded traditions as had made the greatness of Roman law. The decisions of the courts were unprincipled in every sense. Charlemagne checked the tendency toward lawlessness by



appointing special judges to hold assizes and make the trial of major offences uniform and reliable. But true justice is impersonal in character and this was the age of persons. For Greeks and Romans human law was justified as an expression of reason. for Teutons it was primarily the decision of the tribe and therefore later the decision of the ruler. In the disorder that followed Charlemagne's death justice ceased to exist the tribes ruled for their own good and the German world sank into brutality and superstition. From superstition arose an extraordinary travesty of justice. The Teuton ever prone to irrational fancies seems to have believed in the judgment of God when he had ceased to respect any other. Ordeals and trials by combat were the occasions which furnished an opportunity for the display of God's decision. It is useless to comment on the absurdity of these devices. The ordeals were tests which could only result in condemnation unless some evasion was practised while the trial by combat was only a way of admitting that might was right. The whole system was an open proof of the fact that men had sunk to a recognition of nothing but trickery brute force or the strange accidents which passed for miracles. From these depths men were rescued by a revival of the study of law during the twelfth century the cause of this revival will be noticed later.

§ 4 In all ages of the world reason justifies itself not as an abstract principle but as the one way in which the problems of life can be solved. Desire may furnish incentives but desires lead only to collision or the most temporary forms of co operation. Sta

bility and progress depend upon reason. If we speak of peace or progress as themselves objects of desire, we must remember that the good which reason discovers may be an object of desire; but only of rationalised desire. But reason, as a practical recognition of the good, does not produce its effects by abstract proofs; the intellect of man must get to a lofty position before it can survey the world speculatively; and the way up is along the road of material comfort.

In the sixth and succeeding centuries we have an example of the least stable form of society. In it there is oppression and greed combined with lawlessness and absence of production. The nobility, like a starving man, lived for a time on the strength of former days; it sank inevitably into poverty, and its principles became the profession of free lances or the empty glory of a brilliant but useless Knighterrantry. As it declined there grew up another class, wholly different in character. There was, of course, at all times a demand for the common necessities of life. Some of these, such as food, could be obtained by direct plunder; others involved more elaborate production, for example clothing, which always tended to become more ornamental and costly. The trades connected with the production of clothing and armour slowly acquired some importance. The men engaged in these trades tended toward city life and so acquired a strength not possible to a scattered agricultural population. So the first beginning of opposition to the feudal nobility comes from the burghers of such cities, especially the Saxon settlements of Flanders and England. The origin of the free cities is to be

ascribed to that love of liberty which oppression increases rather than extinguishes, together with the increase of wealth which enabled the citizens to obtain charters in return for loans, in some cases the movement seems to have been begun by a voluntary compact between all the inhabitants of a city to respect their mutual rights and oppose the oppression of an overlord

The history of any outstanding occupation, as e.g. the wool-trade, would show how from the eleventh century onwards there is a distinct change in the tone of Western Europe. Trade acquired power, the merchant becoming powerful soon became respectable. This was not a mere shifting of power from one group to another. It was a change that bore no analogy to the rise and fall of duchies. It was significant primarily because it was a broadening of the basis of society, and secondarily because it involved principles of permanent value for the societies of men. Trade makes for peace: its wars are defensive rather than offensive; it discourages waste either of men or materials. It is far from being an unmixed source of good; greed, meanness of spirit and the utmost cruelty can be bred from thrift and love of wealth. Yet it would be fair to say that public morality at this period made rapid progress, and made it chiefly through commercial interests. A law-abiding nation is by no means a spontaneous growth. The will to be just is a product of inherited social instincts, and the first step toward its production is effective legislation. So soon as the merchants began to acquire power there was an attempt to suppress the more

flagrant disorders. The open robbery of travellers was at any rate discouraged; and as the nobles were the chief offenders, the princes had to support the middle against the upper class. Robbery on land comes under some definite territorial jurisdiction, and this fact makes it more directly a breach of justice. On the high seas there is no such definiteness; and if any proof were required to show how little sense of justice apart from law is given to man, it would be found in the history of piracy. In the thirteenth century we find the King supporting the chartered towns against the feudal lords and the towns themselves providing armed police under an officer of the Crown whom they elected. About the same time the problem of communication between towns and the safety of men and property *outside the towns* led to confederation. Co-operation of citizens in their own cities was doubtless a good preparation for this more extended form of co-operation. Yet it is a little astonishing to find the principles active enough to produce so powerful a union as the Hanseatic Confederacy before the close of the thirteenth century. This league, being an affair of maritime cities, was designed to check robbery and piracy. The overseas trade was greatly increased during the Crusades, partly because the passage of the armies gave opportunity for merchants to travel, and partly because Oriental products became the delight of the luxurious. Yet trade overseas was not easily protected; the nations of Europe had no common understanding, even when they were not actively at war; and, at sea, nations that were not European or men who belonged

to no nationality came into conflict "The liberty of the sea," says Hallam, "was another name for the security of plunderers" But even against this evil some defence was provided Mercantile law was created in the thirteenth century, and accepted by the Mediterranean Powers It was not put in force till long after, the shuffling of partial monarchs was notorious and there was a tacit understanding that seamen when victorious brought fame on their kingdoms, while in defeat or capture they were to be repudiated by their nation In spite of these defects, the thirteenth century is a period of remarkable progress in the idea of international regulation In one respect this interaction of nations revived an old error Long after the responsibility of the individual was recognised by law, the relations between towns was treated differently In cases of robbery involving two separate towns, if the injured did not obtain restitution he received permission from his overlord to get what he could from the evil doer's town, this being called a "right of reprisal" This crude form of justice shows that the force of law was still dependent upon strength of arms, there was still not only the natural tendency to rob (which indeed flourishes now), but also the open confession that one injustice cures another

§ 5 With the growth of trade and the decline of oppression the occupations of the nobility were changed War was still a prominent part of life, but the old custom of rallying the retainers ceased The charters of the free towns often expressly released the burgesses from military service, but they required

protection more than anyone. So that the feudal lords developed into leaders of paid troops, and the national Kings became, in various degrees, supreme magistrates, who supported the people against the lords in administration. Legislation was still wholly in the hands of the aristocracy and government was in no sense representative. Hereditary rights over the land gave the nobles a source of wealth, and this was in many cases increased by growing prosperity. But the fact that trade was a disgrace, while the younger sons of noble families had no resources, led to an artificial state of society. The Age of Chivalry, aptly described as "superstition all awry," was a strange medley of lofty ideals and foolish practices. Its extravagances are enshrined in the immortal satire of Don Quixote; it was the theme of the great mediæval romances; in some respects it will always be typical of the poetry of life, as it was also intimately related to the religious mysticism of its age. One thing only need be said about it here. The interests of chivalry and trade were a complete antithesis; also, they were complementary. Chivalry was the school of honour; its ideal was that of service, warmed with the emotion of love, and consecrated by the readiness to face death. Its creed was loyalty, a spiritual heritage from feudal customs, and its religion was the defence of virtue and helplessness. The knight was consecrated no less than the monk, and ranked with the monk as one who bore the sword of the Lord. To unite the virtues of thrift and prudent calculation with this high-spirited contempt of gain was the problem left by the early Middle Ages.

Sordid commercialism was the vice that ever threatened the prosperous burghers. The time was to come when freedom itself was to be sold for a price and the fear of personal discomfort would rob men of the fear of disgrace. The difference of the knightly courtesy and courage from the merchant's offensive wealth and phant faith—this is the antithesis which literature has preserved for all time as a warning and a direction to mankind.

§ 6 In the ideas of chivalry the Middle Ages reached the summit of their development—so far as concerns the morality of the temporal life. But the most distinctive feature of this period in the West is the strong line of distinction between things temporal and things spiritual. The source of the distinction is found in the New Testament but while primitive Christians understood the distinction as a separation of the spiritual from the temporal the Church of the Middle Ages was far removed from the simple idea of separation from the world. Increase of wealth and especially ownership of land made it necessary for the Church dignitaries to take an active part in politics. The ecclesiastical organisation thus became an important factor in matters entirely outside the range of religion. Charlemagne recognised the value and importance of this independent system and fostered without ceasing to control it. The system was independent in the sense that it looked for its final control to the authority of the Roman bishopric the Papacy. When the empire of Charlemagne broke up a natural conflict arose between the idea of territorial Churches and the idea of a Catholic or Universal Church. This

conflict would never have arisen if the Church had been concerned only with the souls of men; but as it owned men and lands in every kingdom, the question was really whether or no every king would divide his territory with the Pope. This was the ultimate meaning of the question of investiture. The cleric and the layman alike had to swear allegiance to some one; there was a recognised investiture for knights, and by that ceremony every knight was bound to his lord for life; if the whole hierarchy of ecclesiastics swore fealty to the Pope, the Sovereign was left with a territory half full of people who were not his subjects, and did not own his control. The obvious basis of compromise was to allow the Pope jurisdiction in matters of religion, and give the temporal ruler authority in secular affairs. This was in fact agreed upon more than once, but even then no one was able to say what was religious and what was secular. The real problem was the necessity for unity over the area of the Christian world. There was continual strife between the different parts, and nothing seemed to afford a basis for unity except the common religion. Thus when one prince was able to overrule others, his policy was to join with the Pope, and so get a *universal* element as the sanction for a claim to *universal* power. Thus the desire for unity and peace admits the fiction of an Empire; but the imperial position was won by continually fostering the Papal claims to universal power, so that ultimately two powers were left face to face, Emperor and Pope. The struggle down to 1250 was carried out mainly by a policy in which the Emperor supported the territorial



spirit against the Papal supremacy, and the Popes aimed to keep the Empire divided by fostering independence in the separate sections. The policy was suicidal for both. The end came when both discovered that supremacy had been sacrificed to their mutual antagonisms.

This long struggle for power was not in harmony with the spirit of Christianity. To it was due in large measure the lax morality of the times. There is no need to dwell on the dark side of this subject, it is difficult to estimate with any accuracy the amount of praise or blame which religion earned during these centuries. There were pious saints and dissolute monks, there were great and austere rulers as well as profligate Popes, there was a lofty ideal and most inadequate realisation. In short, there was a mixture of best and worst in this as in all things else. A catalogue of the vices harboured by the Church, or a list of the crimes committed in the name of religion, would not be edifying or instructive. It is more profitable to consider the whole record and try to estimate through it the spirit of these ages. In the first place, religion is so far a *matter of feeling* that it easily takes on the character of those emotions which the people have already by nature. When the Teutons were "converted" they really passed with all their superstitions into an organisation which they could not possibly understand. Until some kind of culture became general, the Teutons did nothing but infect the Roman tradition with their own superstitions. At the same time they brought in also their own crude conception of compensation for guilt by payment, they bought

the forgiveness of God as they paid on earth the assessment of a crime ; they atoned for the murder of their kin by slaying the enemies of God, and entered paradise as they entered the temple of Jerusalem, ankle deep in blood. Morality everywhere was too external. Men gave all they had in frenzied panic at the approach of death, but they did not reform their lives. Or if penitence and morbid fear struck them in the power of manhood, they renounced the world, and having for many years done evil, ended by refusing to do anything except pray. It was this parade of scourging, starving, and vain repetitions that seemed to obscure the ideal of a Christian life which was at once both good and normal.

From the earliest times Christianity was suspicious of the normal. An Eastern element came into its scheme of life, and it was never quite reconciled to the idea of service without separation. This was the root of the objection to married priests. It was not merely a question of clerical efficiency ; in many cases freedom from the cares of family life would doubtless give more time for the cure of souls ; but the point was in the sentiment against marriage as a lower condition of life, if not altogether a state of sin. Some allowance must be made for the fact that one extreme produces another ; a general licentiousness gave the profession of celibacy a peculiar value, and the degradation of passion fostered a reverence for virginity.

Much less excusable was the growth of intolerance. The Crusades were a product of that enthusiasm which Hallam neatly defines as "superstition in motion." Apart from the instigations of persons interested in

political or commercial schemes and overlooking the adventurers who caught at any chance of plunder, the Crusaders were a remarkable army of bigots. If the cause was in some sense good, and loyalty to God demanded some action, the actual conduct of the wars showed clearly enough what elemental passions found an outlet in the slaughter of infidels. Nor was the infidel always a dangerous enemy, similar crusades were organised against people whose only fault was a harmless difference of opinion. The most conspicuous case was the slaughter of the Albigenses, with whom were associated the Waldenses. In both cases the charge of heresy concerned nothing but dogmas, and the heretics were marked by a simplicity of life and peaceful morality superior to the practice of the orthodox. The thirteenth century produced some anticipations of the Reformation but the day of victory for that cause was not yet reached.

A distorted view of life, inordinate superstition and vengeful bigotry—these were the vices by which the purity of Christian morals was degraded. On the other side of the account must be reckoned the virtues which the Church sheltered and nourished. It must never be forgotten that on the whole the Church was the heir and guardian of the Roman traditions. Its law, its constitution and above all its concept of humanity as one whole to be united together in a theocratic empire, were persistent forces that made for order and ultimately for righteousness. Against the learning of the pagan world it adopted at times a bigoted hostility. Gregory I (600 A.D.) was one of the earliest Popes to condemn all knowledge of the

world, that is of philosophy, science, and art, as useless : he was himself uncultured and, like others of his kind, could see in culture no immediate help toward personal salvation. But the error was redeemed in later years, and pursuit of knowledge, such as there was, became especially associated with religious establishments. This love of knowledge was never so essential a part of Christianity as the love of mankind, and every writer dwells upon a feature which distinguishes modern civilisation from the ancient pagan attitude. This is the existence of "public institutions for the alleviation of human miseries, which have long been scattered over every part of Europe." Churches and monasteries, in spite of all abuses, kept always in view the fact that faith, hope, and charity were the essential virtues, and that the greatest of these is charity.

## APPENDIX

### (a) CHRONOLOGY—

- |          |     |   |
|----------|-----|---|
| A.D. 395 | . . | Final division of the Empire into East and West. Barbarian Invasion of the West.                  |
| 410      | . . | Capture and sack of Rome by Alaric.   |
| 476      | . . | End of the Western line of Emperors.  |
| 489-526  | . . | Gothic Kingdom of Theodoric in Italy.<br>Boethius (480-525) principal philosopher of this period. |
| 529-534  | . . | Justinian Emperor ; Roman law consolidated (the <i>Codex</i> and <i>Digest</i> ).                 |
| 560-636  | . . | Isidore of Seville (encyclopædic review of learning).   |

CHRONOLOGY—*continued*

A D 622	Era of the Hegira [Arabic culture begins a century later Greek philosophy preserved in Arabic centres of learning down to thirteenth century]
638	Pipin (of Landen) Frankish Mayor of the Palace
680-755	St Boniface Apostle of Germany
688	Pipin of Heristal actual ruler of Franks
711	Arabs invade Spain
732	Charles Martel checks Saracens (Arabs) and saves Gaul
751	Last Merovingian (Childeric III) deposed
	Carlovingian line begins Pipin (the Short) assists the Pope against the Lombards beginning of relations between the Popes and Frankish rulers
758	Charles (the Great) and Carloman succeed to Pipin
771	Charles sole King
773 774	Charles conquers Lombards at appeal of the Pope
800	Charles becomes Emperor (735-804 Alcuin organises education)
	(776-856 Rhaban Maur the great scholar of the age)
814	Death of Charles succeeded by Lewis I who divides the Empire (817 839) and it finally disappears in 888 on the death of Charles the Fat
	Scotus Erigena (c 815 877) revives Neo Platonic ideas

CHRONOLOGY—*continued.*

- A.D. 901 . . Germany and Italy invaded by Magyars.
- 919 . . Henry the Fowler, King of Germany: drives back Magyars.
- 936 . . Otto the Great.
- 962 . . Otto becomes Emperor (973, Otto II.; 983, Otto III.).  
Gerbert obtains great reputation for learning; known as Pope Sylvester II., the "philosopher pope."
- 1000 . . The Magyars embrace Christianity.
- 1002 . . Death of Otto III.; Henry becomes King of Germany and unites the Kingdom of Italy with the Empire.
- 1024 . . Henry II.; 1026, Conrad II.; 1039, Henry III.
- 1056 . . Henry IV.
- 1059 . . Nicholas II., Pope, asserts independence of the Papacy.
- 1073 . . Gregory VII. (Hildebrand).
- 1076 . . The Pope excommunicates the Emperor.  
In 1077 Henry submits to the Pope (Canosa).
- 1081 . . Henry resumes opposition to Pope and captures Rome.
- 1093 . . Anselm becomes Archbishop of Canterbury. (The first of the Scholastics.)
- 1096 . . Henry V. becomes King.
- 1111 . . Henry V. claims right of clerical investiture. Contest over investiture by laymen continues as the clergy refuse to abide by the concessions made by Pope Paschal II.

## CHRONOLOGY—continued

- A.D. 1117 The school of Chartres flourishes under Bernard
- 1122 . . Concordat of Worms (question of investitures settled by compromise)
- 1096-1141 The school of St Victor Hugo begins this school of Mysticism (the Victorines)  
(1079-1142, Peter Abelard)
- 1144 . . Arnold of Brescia preaches religious reform Spiritual authorities not to possess worldly goods or exercise secular authority
- 1146 Second Crusade a failure  
(1090-1154 William of Conches author of first mediæval treatise on ethics)
- 1152 Frederic I (Papal legate declares that Empire is held from See of Rome the vassals of the Emperor reject the assertion)
- 1162 . . Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, struggle between King and Pope in England
- 1180 . . Death of John of Salisbury
- 1189 . . Third Crusade
- 1190 . . Henry VI (crowned Emperor 1191)
- 1220 . . Frederic II crowned Emperor, quarrels with Pope Gregory IX
- 1241 . . Hanseatic League begins
- 1250 . . Frederic II dies, succeeded by Conrad IV

(b) The following references will be found useful for supplementary reading Dean Church, *The Beginning of the Middle Ages*, H W C Davis, *Mediæval Europe* (Home University Library), and Bell, *Mediæval Europe* (Oxford, 1911), are excellent as introductions Bryce,

*Holy Roman Empire*, for the history ; H. O. Taylor, *The Mediæval Mind*, for aspects of culture ; for England, J. R. Green, *Short History*, chaps. ii. and iii. Hallam, *Europe during the Middle Ages*, and Guizot, *History of Civilisation in Europe*, give the main outlines. For the more aspiring there is of course Gibbon, chaps. xxix.-xxx.

(c) In the first period the work done by Karl the Great (Charlemagne) is most important. The name of Alcuin is specially associated with the maintenance of knowledge and the organisation of schools. This movement really constitutes a "revival of learning," sometimes called the *First Renaissance*; but conditions were unfavourable, and the attempt was only partially successful. The legal and political organisation of Charles is also noteworthy ; Dean Church gives the following summary of that organisation :—

"His system of government was simple, and he aimed at combining with the exercise of his own authority the sanction of publicity and popular concurrence. The force of his administration consisted in the method and energy which he infused into the public service, the steadiness and activity which he required of his agents, and the patient vigilance with which he watched over the whole ; though it is more than probable that in that rough time, these agents carried out but inadequately and unequally his attempts to establish some sort of discipline in the vast and wild world over which he presided. His officers were of two classes. There was the local hierarchy : dukes governing provinces, some of which have since become kingdoms ; bishops with extensive domains, enjoying great immunities ; counts and inferior chiefs, either territorial or in the great cities, removable at pleasure, though with the natural tendency to become hereditary. All were bound to the military and political service of the kingdom. And, next, there was a central system of special commissioners, envoys, delegates, *Missi* as they were called, deputed with ample powers from the king himself to different parts of his realm, to superintend, and if necessary to take into their hands the administration of justice, and generally to inspect,



examine, reform, report, and thus to bring the whole of the kingdom under the superintendence and, as it were, within the touch of the central authority. Further, besides that he was incessantly moving about in different parts of his kingdom, he brought himself twice every year face to face with his chiefs and people in the general assemblies (*Malli, Placita*) which, according to the Teutonic custom of doing all important things in stated gatherings of chiefs and freedmen, were held in spring and autumn, for public business. The place of meeting varied, but it seems to have been always in the Eastern and German part of the Frank kingdom. The meeting was sometimes held, as in the Saxon campaigns, in the heart of the enemy's country, and served as the gathering point for the summer's war. But the spring meeting especially brought together all that was most powerful and important in the kingdom round the king, and though his authority was paramount, and his policy his own, all was done in public, and derived strength from public cognizance and assent. Of the mode of holding these assemblies we have a contemporary account from Adalhard, Charles' relative and minister, which shows how in them Charles came into contact not only with his bishops and great men, but with all classes of his subjects, and how in a rough and informal way their opinions were brought before him, and he learned from the best information the tempers and conditions of the distant parts of his kingdom.

"Of the business done in these assemblies, we have records in the collection of public acts, called the *Capitularies of the Frank kings*. They are a vast and most miscellaneous accumulation of laws, regulations, judicial decisions, moral precepts, literary extracts, royal orders, articles of inquiry civil and ecclesiastical, circulars and special letters, down to inventories of farm stock, household furniture, and garden stuff and implements, in the king's residences. All these documents emanated from the king, and were communicated by him to the assemblies. They cover the whole field of life. With scarcely an attempt at order, they show the confusion with which

matters of every sort, political, religious, economical, were all thrown together in the attempt to regulate them. But they also show the strong instinct of early days as to the moral and spiritual laws which underlie and animate the outward framework of civil society. Few collections of laws contain such curious materials for a picture of the ideas and habits of the times. Charles' efforts had but a partial influence on the disorder of his age. The existence of his laws does not necessarily imply their actual effect. This, which must always be remembered in any attempt to illustrate history by legislative records, is specially true of times like his. But his legislation marked where the disorder was; and it left on men's minds a stronger impression than any of which the trace is to be found before his time, of the public rights of the state, and of the obligations towards it both of its rulers and its members. The Capitularies first exhibit with some distinctness that idea of the public interest as distinct from the rights and claims of individuals, which is the one germ of civilised order, and which gives the measure of its progress."

(d) The beginning of the mediæval papacy may be dated from Gregory I. This lends particular interest to a figure which is also eminently typical, and the following description from Fletcher's *Making of Western Europe*, throws much light both on the man and the times:—

"Gregory was born about 540, of noble Roman lineage, though not, perhaps, of the Anician house as has been alleged, and he died of gont, aggravated by his extreme asceticism, at the age of sixty-four, having reigned at the Lateran only fourteen years. He had been prefect of the city during the first Lombard siege, and had endeared himself to all Romans by his generous use of his own private fortune. Two years later he became a monk, and graduated in the school of self-torment which the age regarded as the ideal of holiness. He was the favourite of two successive popes, and was ambassador at Constantinople from 579 to 585, although how he got on in that capacity, considering that he knew no Greek, does not appear. He regarded Constantinople with the true old-

fashioned hatred of the Roman patrician, and this hatred was aggravated by the fact that a certain John (called *Jejunator*, 'the Faster'), as ascetic as himself, became Patriarch of the Eastern capital during his sojourn in it. This John was foolish enough ('wicked enough,' said Gregory, 'a mere precursor of Antichrist') to assume the title of 'Œcumenical Patriarch'—which in plain English means Bishop of the World—a title already borne by several previous patriarchs but since dropped. In 590 the universal honour and love of the Roman people carried Gregory to the Papal chair, an elevation for which he professed to feel himself totally unfitted—that there had never lived a man more absolutely fitted for it no one knew better than Gregory, whose whole life had been a preparation for it. As well in his boundless charity to the poor, his wise and statesmanlike administration of his vast estates (whose income has been computed as even then over £300,000 a year), his missionary and evangelical zeal, his utter fearlessness, his passion for monasticism, as well, alas also, in his gross superstition, his vandalism toward classic art and learning, his infamous behaviour towards the Emperor Maurice, and his spiritual arrogance, he is the herald of the coming ages. It is pleasant to turn from Gregory the diplomatist and schemer, and to remember that this same Gregory was also the man who made the beautiful Roman liturgy what it is to day, who introduced the simple and beautiful Gregorian chants to churches, who cared incessantly for the outcast and the fallen, who restarted on the estates of the Church the practice of husbandry, stock-raising, and horse-breeding, who scrutinised his rent rolls continually, and fell like a thunderbolt on all unjust or harsh stewards. The arm of St Peter, when wielded by a Gregory, was mighty enough to afford shelter to any landowner who would become a tenant of the Church, and many men must have been only too glad to surrender such freedom as Gothic, Greek, and Lombard wars had left them, in order to enjoy that protection. Again, it is pleasant to see Gregory's zeal for the conversion of the

English race; it was he who, as we all know, dispatched St. Augustine to the King of Kent. It was Gregory too who, before he became Pope, had set on foot the conversion of the Arian Visigoths and their King Recarred to Catholicism, and whose careful supervision of the Church in Spain gave it such power in the centuries to come; it was Gregory who, together with Queen Theodelinda, incessantly worked for the conversion of the Lombards and really began it. As for the Catholic Franks, he was rather less successful in his attempts to introduce order and moral life into their wild and turbulent realm, which was yet so full of promise for the future. Whatever he was not, he was unquestioned Patriarch of the West; the first 'Pope' in the sense in which that title, hitherto occasionally given to other bishops, came from henceforth only to the occupant of the Roman See. But a man must not be too far ahead of his age if he is to lead it successfully: Gregory was steeped and soaked in relic-worship, in belief that (childish and profane) 'miracles' were being worked every day all round him, even when they were obviously plagiarised from many of the miracles recorded in the Old Testament. Though he could write very vigorous and very fairly classical Latin, he openly said that it was ridiculous for a good Christian to care about the niceties of grammar."

(e) The literature of the period belongs mainly to the history of mediæval philosophy. In the sphere of religion and ethics Abelard is of particular importance as a (relatively) bold and free thinker.

"The scholars of Abelard, as he himself tells us, in his *Introduction to Theology*, requested him to give them some philosophical arguments, such as were fit to satisfy their minds; begged that he would instruct them, not merely to repeat what he taught them, but to understand it; for no one can believe that which he does not comprehend, and it is absurd to set out to preach to others concerning things which neither those who teach nor those who learn can understand. What other end can the study of philosophy have, if not to lead us to a knowledge of God, t

which all studies should be subordinate? For what purpose is the reading of profane authors and of books which treat of worldly affairs permitted to believers if not to enable them to understand the truths of the Holy Scriptures, and to give them the abilities necessary to defend them? It is above all things desirable for this purpose that we should strengthen one another with all the powers of reason, so that in questions so difficult and complicated as those which form the object of Christian faith, you may be able to hinder the subtleties of its enemies from too easily corrupting its purity" [Guizot, *Civilisation in Europe*, 147]

This is rightly regarded as one of the earliest expressions of a spirit of revolt against authority. Arnold of Brescia, about the same time, is a precursor of the Reformation.

(f) Froude (*Short Studies on Great Subjects*) gives a brief vivid account of the struggle between Henry and Becket showing the English phase of this complicated warfare carried on by the temporal and spiritual powers. The independence asserted by Henry VIII. is the final outcome of that struggle, and its history may be traced back through Edward III. to Henry I.

## CHAPTER X

### THEORY AND PRACTICE, 1250-1500

§ 1. THE thirteenth century is the beginning of the period conveniently styled the Age of Discovery. Between the thirteenth and the fifteenth century there is a marked change in the general character of European life. The features of this change which especially concern our subject are (1) the further development of middle and lower class interests; (2) the discovery of the New World and the consequent expansion of the world both in area and in idea; (3) the revival of learning and the consequent advance of rationality, expressed in part through conscious construction of theory.

The progress of the towns, which has been noticed in the previous period, continued steadily during these centuries. Over all Europe the narrow conditions of feudalism steadily declined and a new consciousness of power began to inspire the activities of the lower classes. The towns were able to make demands for liberty that continually increased in importance. Naturally their improved condition excited the envy of the peasants, and the rise of free cities is followed, though slowly, by demands for

better conditions of life among the peasantry The fourteenth century was marked by a series of outbreaks that show where the fire smouldered The Jacquerie in France broke out into open revolt in 1358, the English peasantry organised an insurrection in 1381, Switzerland set a brilliant example of heroism in the cause of liberty, strongly affecting even the country of their oppressors, Burgundy, to the north-west the Flemish cities were a model of self-reliant progress, while away to the east Bohemian peasantry were attempting in vain to shake off the bondage of their oppressive nobility In two cases the movements were connected with definite assertions of equality of a kind quite new The English revolt was connected with the teachings of Wycliffe and the Bohemian with that of Huss itself derived from Wycliffe These doctrines will be considered later, here it is enough to remark that the doctrines presuppose considerable change in the condition of the lower classes There had been a period of emancipation from close servitude to the land, and a great extension of the principle of free labour with wages, before the mass of labourers began to feel themselves to be freemen The doctrine of equality was not in this case a barren formula, England had preserved to an uncommon degree the idea of personal freedom, most clearly shown in the right of every freeman to be tried by his equals, and there was sufficient popular feeling to support the terse epitome of natural freedom in the verse—

"When Adam delved and Eve span,  
Who was then the gentleman?"

Along with this attempt to anticipate economic improvements there was also a definite movement toward republican forms of government. In secular affairs this took the form of increased attention to the needs of all classes. Various methods were adopted to get the needs of all classes clearly presented to the Government; of these the best was the method of summoning representative members of the classes (chiefly traders and merchants) to state the demands of their class. This was far removed in practice from the method of representative government, in which the constituents elect their representative; for in many cases a ruling prince only nominated corrupt and servile favourites, and so created a fictitious national council which bound the people to contracts and taxations with a specious appearance of public consent. The fault was that the nations were too undeveloped as yet to manage themselves; they had gone far enough to veto some forms of tyranny, but not far enough to enable the people to support their own leaders. The results of the whole process may be summed up by saying that at the end of the fifteenth century monarchical power was stronger than ever, but its strength was due to a fresh sense of nationality arising out of increased knowledge and remaining as the outcome of more ambitious schemes of self-government. The halt is made, as it were, half-way to the goal. The people do not rule; they have no power of common action; they accept the word of one ruler as their best chance of unity and order; but they have succeeded in leavening the methods of government with a new



respect for their existence as a class if not as individuals

Thus we see why the struggle that ended in 1265 between Emperor and Pope was a struggle in which the conquered dragged the conqueror into the grave with him. It had been a struggle between two great universals Empire and Church. It ended with the disappearance of both. By the end of the fifteenth century it was obvious to all that the universal empire was an empty fiction the individual kingdoms were no longer controlled either by an actual emperor or by the idea of universal empire. Along with the growth of separate nationalities went an increasing doubt of the overlordship of the Pope in other words the national spirit demanded a national church. Sentiment might well have retained its hold and preserved the unbroken supremacy of so great an institution as the Papacy but the papal policy had overreached itself and broken down. The French King insulted by the domineering of Boniface had put the Pope in his pocket and shifted the residence of the Pope from Rome to Avignon. Upon this followed the great schism when the world was presented with the spectacle of two (and at one time three) popes. In this eclipse of the papal glory a strong attempt was made to set spiritual government on a broader basis the decision of spiritual matters was transferred from the Pope to the Councils. But in spiritual as in temporal affairs this movement was premature. The Conciliar Age the fifteenth century ended with a restoration of the supreme papal authority. In temporal and spiritual affairs

alike the need for unity and order was paramount, and led to a new acquiescence in supreme rules. But this was a conscious acquiescence rather than a blind submission, and the extent to which it was a conditional acquiescence was to be shown in the reformation.

§ 2. The whole spirit of the Middle Ages seems to have been centred in the idea of a universal kingdom, which was ultimately the Kingdom of God. This peculiar outlook depended largely on the way in which the idea of the world had gone on from the times of the Roman Empire. That empire constituted a world with no vista reaching out beyond; and whether they referred to the habitable world, or to the world of things knowable, the mediæval thinkers spoke of them as totalities, rounded and finished. The Ptolemaic system in astronomy embodied the typical conception of a universe made up of one great circle enveloping all other circles. The system of Thomas Aquinas was another typical form, as round and complete and finished as the world it was supposed to mirror. There is an unmistakable air of completeness about these mediæval notions; the very word "universe" is typical of their conception of a sum total of things finally measured and grasped. And in the very day of its completeness the system broke. A Portuguese monarch, carrying out a last crusade to make the Kingdom of God complete, fostered in his agents a restless spirit of search for new lands: the result was the discovery of a new world. The mediæval passed into the modern world as it were by its own impetus. As the idea of the earth

changed so also did that of the heavens Copernicus began what Galileo finished The whole round world no longer hung as Dante saw it from a point of light ruled by the law of perfect circular motion The earth so long fixed in the centre of all things moved again science reverted to the position it held in the third century before Christ<sup>1</sup> and public opinion was compelled in time to accept this inevitable change of attitude

Of these two great discoveries the former was not immediately effective The moral result of the discovery of America was the relief which it gave to those who were already in revolt against the tyranny of Catholicism In Europe itself the social unity was sufficiently strong to make heresy a national evil If the Catholic Church was the true representative of God and the only authority in matters of religion then disobedience was an offence against God and would be punished as the Old Testament declared by plague and pestilence not only upon the offenders but upon the whole nation Quite apart from the theory there was precedent enough for fastening upon heretics the blame which should have been laid upon the prevalent lack of cleanliness The New World offered an escape from this bondage Expeditions began during the fifteenth century in which groups of people set out to found colonies and try experiments in religious and social schemes Some of these were genuine attempts

<sup>1</sup> In 282 B.C. a heliocentric theory was elaborated from the Pythagorean basis by Aristarchus of Samos The analogy between this period and that of Democritus should be noticed the influence of atomism is very marked

to revive freedom; others are rather to be described as fantastic undertakings; but quite apart from the success of the separate expeditions, from the possibility of freedom even at the cost of exile, and the discovery of nations that had so long remained outside the fold of that religion which was supposed to be universal, arose a profound scepticism about the immutability of religious and social conditions. The ring-fence of traditions was at least breached, if not broken down.

§ 3. From the busy life of sea-ports and the stir of expeditions we turn away to the world of theory, and find in the literature of the age a startling reflection of its spirit, with forecasts of still greater issues. The vital question of the twelfth century is the question of government. There is universal agreement that man, being at once soul and body, must be governed by a spiritual and a temporal power; but the relation of these powers is in dispute. Scholarship of all kinds is directly associated with the Church, so that it is no matter for surprise that at first the mode and matter of the various treatises is ecclesiastical. About 1150 there was a spirited protest against the political activities of the Church, put forward by St. Bernard in his work *On Reflection*. The object of this treatise was to prove that the Church degraded itself by doing the work which should be left to its menials, the secular powers. A more decisive statement of this doctrine was given by John of Salisbury, the friend and correspondent of Becket. Though he, too, is an ecclesiastic, he is in temper a man of the world and a scholar. The political theory of John of Salisbury may be regarded as primarily philosophical; though

much of it belongs to the general ideas of the period, yet in one respect it attains distinction. For more emphasis is laid on the old idea that law is really the ruler of men, law in this connection being the eternal and immutable laws of life. Society must have some form of adjustment, and this is named equity as being the essential element in laws, not very different from Plato's ideal justice. Thus the true basis of political life is righteousness, and therefore the Church as the embodiment of righteousness is the supreme ruler of man. The prince is the embodiment of law, which is derivative from equity, and so occupies the second place. It follows, also, that a prince who does not act as representative of God, that is of righteous law, has no claim to obedience. The "prince" then becomes a "tyrant," and tyrannicide is for John of Salisbury an obligation. This point strikes a modern reader as somewhat extravagant, yet it is a very central theme from this twelfth century onwards, and the understanding of many later theories depends upon understanding this. First of all, the mediæval mind acts logically, the question to be settled is one of definition, namely: What is the "essence" of a ruler? Having discovered this "essence" to consist in the administration of law, the scholastic writer deduces that a ruler who ignores law in reality has no "essence," no true being. Thus a logical, and in that sense rational, basis is found for deposing the tyrant. In spirit, therefore, this is far removed from any anachistic schemes, and the theory may even command our admiration if we appreciate the very fundamental way in which it denies the right of any man

to control others, except in so far as that control is part of the divine control of individuals in the interests of humanity. The fault of the whole method is that it is still a logical scheme, a deduction of propositions from propositions with no sufficient relation to human affairs. The thirteenth century brought the *Politics* of Aristotle more prominently into notice, and expanded the ideas of the writers on this question of the right relation between ruler and ruled.

Thomas Aquinas presents some interesting points. He is influenced by the fact that about the time when he was theorising on politics, the Empire had temporarily lapsed. This fact is reflected in his indifference to the question of a universal ruler, or emperor; he is quite open to the idea of monarchy, and merely asserts that rule is natural, and will be right in any form. His preference is for a secular kingship, limited by the right of the clergy to control spiritual affairs. The scheme of Thomas's philosophy shows more distinctly the growing influence of Aristotelian thought, though it remains a true development of scholasticism. The foundation is law, defined as "an ordinance of reason for the common good, promulgated by him who has the care of a community." This definition introduces the idea of *positive law*; in other words, the effective law is not merely the universal necessity, but also the actual formulation of it by the superior power. Thomas maintains the idea of law as something primarily universal, immutable, and natural. He endorses the view that positive law when at variance with natural law is only a corruption of law. But he recognises the anarchic element in all doctrines

of tyrannicide and definitely rejects them he suggests a relation of ruler to ruled which approaches the ideas of election and constitutional monarchy. But the newly acquired knowledge of the Greek commonwealths is too much overlaid by mediæval traditions to produce any democratic ideas. Thomas is opposed to democracies and believes that they only breed dissension. *the ruler must be one as the heart rules in the body and God Himself in the universe.* This is the mediæval style of argument still unregenerate apart from that, Thomas is singularly moderate and advanced in his views. he admitted a sphere of human reason distinct from that of revelation and this combined with his views on law formed the basis of many ideas afterwards developed by Hobbes and Locke (*v* p 268)

Early in the fourteenth century Dante wrote his essay on *Monarchy*. In form it was typically mediæval and its theme was also mediæval. Dante saw that the weakness of Europe lay in its dissensions. He voiced the general desire for peace. his essay is a chain of syllogisms proving that the whole order of the universe demands an empire of mankind. like other mediævalists he laboured under the belief that man has only an option between Imperial and Papal control. one of the universals must be chosen and for his part Dante chose the Imperial control for secular affairs. The interest of his essay lies in the clear proof it gives that peace had become the most vital need of the age. During the endless quarrels of petty princes and the still more flagrant quarrelsomeness of the Italian states the

growth of trade had created a demand for security, and from now henceforth political literature shows that the pen was employed to spread abroad the reasonableness of peace.

Next after Dante came a group of writers employed to justify the claims of Emperor or Pope to universal Empire. Here again the most interesting feature is the mere fact that the question should thus be, as it were, referred to reason. The resultant works were special pleas for the justification of each writer's employer; but the mere fact that the positions were reasoned out was a tribute to the growing intellect of the European peoples. Into the details of these writings we shall not enter. On the side of the papacy, the old arguments are set in array once more; spirit is superior to body, and therefore the spiritual is superior to the temporal order; the sword of the earthly prince can only be used at the direction of the Pope, and so on. Once indeed a Papal writer made the error of pleading that the Empire of the West was given to the Pope by Constantine; but this support of a divine right by appeal to an emperor's generosity was quickly seen to be a diplomatic *faux pas*. On the side of the Emperor there was primarily a rebuttal of these arguments. The Church took refuge in the Old Testament as a basis for asserting that the ruler was appointed by the priest, and that the true Kingdom must be ultimately theocratic. The opponents clung to the New Testament, and asked where it could be proved that Christ's Kingdom was of this world. The submission of the Early Church to the Roman Empire, and the indifference of the Apostolic Church to earthly



power were strong presumptions against the Papal claims. But underneath all this array of traditional arguments lay a basis of action not fully recognised by either party. When the question arose Who does make kings if not the representative of God?—the answer came with unexpected force the people.

Like many other logical conclusions this was no more than a recognition of facts by the reason. It was mediated by the study of Aristotle's *Politics* now once more in the hands of students. It was helped by the history of the Italian states which had frequently shown more or less distinctly how the people are the basis of a throne. When at this crisis it became necessary to support a scheme of government which should supersede the Papal hierarchy there was ample source for the idea of a system that would be in the main representative. In Marsiglio of Padua this idea is most explicitly stated. As the pupil of Ockham Marsiglio derived much of his knowledge from one who was himself the author of a great political theory. But Marsiglio was less timid than his teacher. He wrote first and was less restrained than his master so that in his scheme we may see the most extreme point to which theory at this time advanced. The keynote is struck in the title, *Defensor Pacis*. The ruler is primarily the Keeper of the Peace here as in Dante the problem is seen to be ultimately a problem of social order. In conformity with this and with the ideas derived from Greek political theory the real authority is said to be in law. The ruler is he who administers the law. A Polity arises through the association of individuals for mutual good. So the

basis is the people ; the actual principles of order are expressed through reason in law ; a ruler is required to enforce law, and therefore the primary duty of a ruler is punishment of offenders. Similarly, in the case of the Church, the real " Church " is the whole body of believers, lay or clerical. They unite in order to achieve their own highest good, and their community is not to be controlled by one man on a claim of special prerogatives, but by their own common voice, which for convenience amounts to rule by representative councils. In this scheme the most revolutionary feature was the admission of laymen to any part in church government. That was a death-blow to the whole scheme of Papal hierarchy. Beside that may be put the other remarkable feature, namely, that in the end Marsiglio has omitted to defend the Imperial claims. History had already decided that territorial or national kingship was to supersede universal Empire. Marsiglio has taken up the whole question of government and resolved both secular and temporal government into a form of republicanism. In this he had outrun his times, but the movement of the world was toward the goal he anticipated.

The *Defensor Pacis* was written about 1324, and represents the highest development of academic politics before the sixteenth century. Forty years later, we find another movement, very different in form though not fundamentally different in spirit and purpose. This was the movement led by Wycliffe. In form this is a spiritual feudalism ; in place of the republican tendencies of all writers inspired by Aristotle, we find in Wycliffe the indigenous methods of thought

which arrange men in a hierarchy of priests kings nobles But in spite of this distinctive form and a distinctive terminology Wycliffe is in spirit at one with his great predecessor John of Salisbury The doctrine that all rights are of God is no more than a restatement of the earlier doctrine that the basis of rule is righteousness To some degree all revivals of the two Christian doctrines the sovereignty of God and the equality of man must prove democratic in spirit But it is necessary to repeat continually the warning against using the term democratic too freely in connection with the movements of the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries The theorists of those days were much more akin to a modern philanthropist than to a modern democratic leader they contemplated the rule of the masses by the masses as little as the Abolitionists contemplated the rule of America by negroes This is one of the cases where effects exceed their immediate cause Wycliffe can hardly have foreseen the effects of his own teaching it was the combination of the intellectual and spiritual progress with independent economic tendencies that made the movement so far reaching and important (v p 197) Wycliffe is directly connected with Huss and through Huss with the Communistic movements of the sixteenth century (p 223)

The Conciliar Age showed a reactionary tendency An attempt was made to check the extreme tendencies by compromise It was natural that this compromise should take the form of a moderate concession to the extremists such as could be made by giving more power to the councils without fundamentally changing

their constitution, or allowing them to become in any degree secular. Gerson aimed at a method of church government which would avoid the objectionable elements in the theory of Marsiglio—in other words, escape from the democratic conclusions involved in that theory. Nicholas Cusanus elaborated a theory of Conciliar government, which retained the appearance of being representative, but as the representation was only by nobles, it was not in any sense a republican theory. The real factor which influenced the more active minds of this time was not that of the people, but rather that of "corporations." The political theorists who entertained any ideas of substituting for direct individual control any more extended form of government, were attracted first by the "bodies corporate," which were already recognised as "persons" in the legal sense. This intermediate idea, coming as it did between the single individual and the whole body of individuals, served for a time as a resting-place for those who saw the necessity of reform and yet shrank from going further in the direction of general representation, or of regarding the Church as the whole "body" of believers.

§ 4. The Reformation brought to a practical conclusion these varied lines of progress. Neither the discovery of America, nor the revival of learning, brought about the exact result achieved in the Reformation. On the one hand, the corrupt state of the Church, on the other, the growth of national ideals, led to the rupture. The idea of a Catholic Church remained intact; Rome was not as yet abandoned, but the Church asserted itself as a body against what

had become a spiritual oligarchy. There had been earlier attempts at a similar social reform. The Lollards had been heretics and reformers, the Hussites were Bohemian Lollards, both had revived the fundamental Christian doctrine of the equality of man. But it was not until Luther's day that there was adequate support for the theory. There was truth in the bitter complaint that "Erasmus laid the egg and Luther hatched it." The secret of Luther's greater success lay in the fact that he declared, dogmatically and crudely enough, the essential equality of man. The whole system of penance implied that the right to sin was measured by the means to pay for it. Between man and God stood the hierarchy of the Church, with various degrees of powers to absolve from sin on payment of a price. Luther offered to every man the right which princes already claimed, the right to be answerable to God only. For this new position many were already prepared by the decline of Papal authority, by the spread of knowledge, and, above all by that growth of self government and self reliance which has been noticed as a persistent feature of the development from mediæval to modern times. If one discovery more than another is the permanent contribution of the sixteenth century to the history of public morality, it is this establishment of the idea of personal worth. In the sphere of religion it was formulated as the doctrine of justification by faith, not by penance. In the system of morality it leads to the demand for righteousness as an inward quality, and at the same time to a clearer idea of obligation as essentially the direction of the will to keep the law in

fear of God and in love of mankind. The result may not have proved so excellent as the ideal, but in this doctrine was contained the essence of the idea of freedom and the root of democratic government.

## APPENDIX

### (a) CHRONOLOGY—

B.C.	1180	. .	Death of John of Salisbury.
	1274	. .	Death of Thomas Aquinas (1227-1274).
	1300	. .	Ockam teaches at Paris.
	1309-1377	. .	Papacy at Avignon.
	1321	. .	Death of Dante (1265-1321). (Wrote <i>De Monarchia</i> , probably 1312.)
	1324	. .	Marsiglio's <i>Defensor Pacis</i> .
	1358	. .	Insurrection of peasants in France.
	1378	. .	The Great Schism.
	1381	. .	Insurrection of peasants in England.
		. .	University of Paris suggests a general Council.
	1384	. .	Wycliffe dies (1324-1384).
	1409	. .	Council of Pisa. A third Pope elected.
	1414	. .	Council of Constance.
	1415	. .	Martyrdom of Huss.
	1440	. .	Invention of printing.
	1453	. .	Fall of Constantinople.
	1492	. .	Voyage of Columbus to America.
	1498	. .	Death of Savonarola.
	1512	. .	The popular party overthrown in Florence; Machiavelli (1469-1527) in exile writes his works; the <i>Prince</i> was first published, 1532.

CHRONOLOGY—*continued*

- B C 1516 . . Erasmus (1467-1536), publishes  
Greek Testament  
1517 . . Luther posts his *Theses*  
1525 . . Insurrection of peasants in Ger-  
many  
1534 . . First edition of complete German  
Bible.  
Anabaptist rising in Munster  
1540 . . Society of Jesuits approved by  
Paul III  
1543 . . Death of Copernicus (1473-1546)  
1564 . . Death of Calvin (1509-1564)

(b) Select references Hallam, Bryce, J R Green as  
named above (p 190), Gierke Mailland, *Political Theories  
of the Middle Ages*, Figgis, J N, *Political Theory from  
Gerson to Grotius*, Poole, R L, *Illustrations of Mediæval  
Thought, Wycliffe and Movements for Reform* (Epochs of  
Church History), Trevelyan, *Wycliffe and his Times*,  
*Cambridge Modern History*, vols 1-2

## CHAPTER XI

### THEORY AND PRACTICE, 1500-1600

§ 1. THE close of the fifteenth century witnessed one of the most remarkable spectacles in the history of Europe,—a republic ruled by a monk. In 1498 Savonarola was burned; the Republic of Florence sank and fell by 1512; and one of the exiles driven out in the restoration of despotic rule was Machiavelli. In the days of his forced leisure Machiavelli thought over the principles of human action and wrote those theories of government and conduct which were to be recognised later as the first purely modern conception of politics. History affords no more striking contrast than that of Savonarola and Machiavelli. For Savonarola morality was the basis and the aim of political action. The forms of government which he devised were republican in their systems of election and in the rotation of magistracies. In many respects the republic of Florence reproduced the typical Greek city-state. But Savonarola infused a moral tone wholly different from any Greek view of life. The government of Florence, while politically republican, was spiritually a tyranny. Every effort was made to force upon the people an ascetic way of life; the



most famous was the Burning of the Vanities when Savonarola organised bands of children to parade the streets and take from all and sundry their superfluous ornaments or to visit homes and collect rouge pots false hair and other vanities to be thrown on the public bonfires. Such proceedings inevitably led to *strong resentment though many were in favour* of moral reform and there was an undoubted measure of success. The theory of Savonarola is the point of most interest. His scheme has been described as

State socialism applied to ethics rather than economics and the experiment was a crucial test of the value of all such schemes. The maxim of Cosimo de Medici that a State cannot be governed by paternosters was definitely opposed. Government by moral force was put on its trial and the issue was not in its favour. The conditions in Italy at the time were so complex that no final judgment could be derived from the experiment. But Machiavelli drew from it the lesson that the essence of successful government is force. He saw in Savonarola's attempt nothing but an abstract idealism wholly inapplicable to the real world and its inhabitants.

Savonarola's position implied the optimistic view of mankind the belief that all men can be controlled directly by the fear of God and the desire for common welfare. Machiavelli starts from the opposite point of view. He takes as his basis the nature of man and regards it as essentially evil. In so doing he was in agreement with theological tradition and its doctrine of original sin but while the theologian preached the regeneration of man through conversion and

divine grace, Machiavelli supported other methods. The failure of the Florentine Republic suggested the idea that the virtues of a peaceful life are only realised under a strong ruler. The prince is the head of Machiavelli's State; he is the typical strong man who grasps fully both the end to be achieved and the means to achieve it. In attaining the end such a man will disregard the common precepts of morality; he will play his game to win, and count nothing disgraceful except failure. Machiavelli does not belittle morality or religion; he regards both as essential to the good State; but religion is an attitude of mind that the prince fosters for his own interests, and morality is an affair of the citizens, not of their ruler. Machiavelli's name became, as it still is, the label for unscrupulous and godless efficiency. It is hardly necessary to say that this popular interpretation ought, by now, to be extinct. The essential features of Machiavelli's doctrine are closely allied, first, to the actual practice of men; secondly, to that revolt against sentimental religiousness which is found again in Nietzsche. Referring to Christianity, Machiavelli says that it "placed the *summum bonum* in humility, in lowliness, and in the contempt of earthly things; paganism placed it in highmindedness, in bodily strength, and in all the other things which make men strongest." "This mode of living," he continues, "seems to have rendered the world weak and given it over as a prey to wicked men who can with impunity deal with it as they please; seeing that the mass of mankind, in order to go to Paradise, think more how to endure wrongs than how to avenge

them. These observations show very clearly how Machiavelli's mind was influenced by the study of pagan writers. He anticipated Nietzsche's preference for efficiency before holiness. It would be mere partisanship to overlook the elements of truth in this view. The fact is that the ideal of Savonarola was the desire of all good men, while Machiavelli concerned himself less with what we should like than with what can be achieved. The interest of this antithesis lies in the fact that it is ever with us. No problem is more acute than that of the relation between religious passivity and unscrupulous activity.<sup>1</sup> The majority of men in all ages consciously or unconsciously testify to the difficulty of uniting a Christian ideal with success in worldly affairs. Monastic renunciation is a policy of despair, and the ruler more than all must feel at times that there is a duty of aggression which is not to be reconciled with the spirit of the New Testament.

§ 2 Before the death of Machiavelli (1527) Luther had begun a movement of a wholly different kind. Machiavelli looked at the State from the point of view of government and of restraint. Luther represents the standpoint of the governed. In a sense his aims were purely religious. *But no movement of importance can be confined to one department of life.* Luther's success in establishing Protestantism led at once to difficult problems of public morality. The distinction of the good man from the good citizen

<sup>1</sup> In Greek thought this is expressed by the continual assertion that it is better to suffer wrong than to do it. In Plato this is always received by the practical man as a paradox.

was made very obvious in all cases where a Protestant was subject to a Catholic ruler; the destruction of Papal authority led to fantastic experiments, such as that of the Anabaptists, requiring some new principles upon which to fix the limits of tolerance. The Bible was the acknowledged basis of action, but then, as always, there was a conflict of interpretations. The Christian principle of equality was another fruitful source of trouble; it was an inspiration for the disorderly and a thorny problem for the well disposed. In short, the Reformation was as prolific in extremes and in evils as any other reactionary movement. It soon became apparent that freedom in spiritual affairs must be combined with strict submission to the secular rulers. This created a new position not wholly foreseen. As the Papal jurisdiction was opposed, the territorial sovereigns became the regulators of religious practices; *belief* admits no control,<sup>1</sup> and there is really no spiritual overlordship, but *worship* is a public act, and so comes under the control of the secular ruler. It is obvious that this beginning leads logically to the conclusion that rulers are concerned with conformity to national customs, secular or spiritual; and for the beliefs of men none but the individuals themselves have any responsibility.

§ 3. The reaction against those Protestants who,

<sup>1</sup> "The thought of man," said Chief Justice Brian in the reign of Edward IV., "shall not be tried, for the devil himself knoweth not the thought of man" (quoted Jethro Brown, *Underlying Principles of Modern Legislation*, p. 182). That was, at least, a clear statement of the main point

as *e.g.* the Anabaptists, were regarded as perverting freedom into license, was most clearly seen in Calvin. For Calvin the first duty of the rulers is to foster the religion or "piety" of the people, secondly they must secure the peace and safety of all. Passive obedience is commanded without exception. But Calvin introduces a new though obvious point, the civil rulers are to inflict capital punishment or wage war regulated by *justice and right reason*, obedience is limited by the command of God, which is another phrase for right reason so that in effect society is to be controlled by the reason of its members.

Calvin became the ruler of Geneva, and in 1542 established there a model government. This was by no means a case of a theologian turned king. Calvin was a lawyer not a monk like Savonarola yet there are points of resemblance between the monk's rule in Florence and Calvin's rule in Geneva. The moral code was the basis of law, an ascetic form of life was enjoined by severe penalties, finally the secular authority became little more than the instrument of the ecclesiastical council. In theory Calvin maintained that the secular and the spiritual spheres of government were wholly separate. The separation was not maintained in Geneva, still less was it supported in other countries where the monarch, now free from Papal authority (*e.g.* in England Elizabeth) had no intention of sacrificing the right of control over the religion of the State. One effect of these movements—perhaps the most lasting—was to restore the original primitive conception of religion. By the

destruction of Papal supremacy every Protestant country regained its church as a national church, and its religion as a State religion. Once more, after many years, loyalty to God and the King were identified; to be a "heretic" was to be the enemy of a Catholic King, and to be a "Papist" was to be traitor to a Protestant ruler. Even in the twentieth century there survived a lingering doubt as to whether a Catholic could be truly a British subject, and many would still feel that an agnostic in religion must sooner or later prove slippery in politics !

§ 4. This unfortunate mixture of ideas greatly increased the chances of war. Granted a political reason for quarrelling, enthusiasm was easily aroused through irrelevant religious questions. The Spanish Armada posed as a Crusade; the civil wars in France became a duel between Catholic and Protestant forces; the revolt of the Netherlands against Spain, became at last an assertion of religious liberty. Clearly in all this the doctrine of passive obedience had been given up in favour of resistance according to reason. That sense of right which led to the Reformation also led away from its earliest injunctions; and the new position was quite as easily justified by skilful exposition of the Old Testament. The progress of time had developed the republican spirit in some nations at least; that spirit constituted a bias toward Protestantism and, at the same time, a perennial source of new life for the religious tenets. The real problem for the theorist is to explain the nature and origin of monarchy; which is done by reference to a primitive contract by which the king

is bound to obey the laws and the people to obey the king so long as he keeps the law. Given this basis, it follows that a tyrant is a ruler who sets himself above law, that there is then no compact, and therefore no injustice or evil in the removal of that tyrant by his (former) subjects.

The theory of political obligation formed at this time was worked out under the pressure of the vital needs. The idea of opposition to the ruler was still closely connected with the idea of sin against God's anointed, the fear of anarchy made revolt undesirable, and to establish the actual authority of those princes who had already rejected the principle of authority (by becoming Protestants) was a nice point for the intellect of the learned, and in spite of difficulties there was no gainsaying the popular claim for recognition. This is a point at which it is advantageous to sum up the broad lines of theory, for Europe had passed through one of its greatest crises and achieved a lasting work.

The real problem is to justify the new basis of government, the people. In the far background lay the idea of a prince a ruler absolute in the sense of being freed from all the restraints which his authority imposed on others. Time had produced a change, and the ruler was now required to obey the laws. The return to Aristotle's politics in the fifteenth century revealed a 'republicanism' existing before Roman Imperialism, the study of Plato or of Seneca furnished the idea of mutual association guided by a notion of justice in general not any particular code but the criterion of all codes. The persistent tradition of a

natural law was easily reconciled with the importance attached by the Reformers to the Old Testament; the law of God was a law of reason under which all human law could come as derivative through human reason, itself the gift of God to man. Religion and reason combined to show that a ruler obtains his position from the people as a body; that his actions must conform to the will of God, which for practical purposes was the national idea of justice; and that the best method of government was to have a ruler ruling in the fear of God, that is to say, making the public good his first object. The main point of this solution is the interaction which it establishes between ruler and ruled; its specific danger was that it really established a right of self-government under a veil of monarchy, and left wholly undecided the question whether the common good was determined by the superior knowledge of the ruler, or simply by the persistent clamour of the people. Here there emerged a new practical difficulty based upon the old problem of the relation between government as a science and government as a power.<sup>1</sup>

§ 5. It will be convenient at this point to say something more on several topics which have been mentioned already. Both in the last chapter and in this it has been evident that many forces were at work which ultimately with successful organisation might produce a complete change in the social life of Europe. The social reforms thus indicated differ from the religious and the political reforms; at the same time, they stand in close relation to both. While the

<sup>1</sup> Cp. p. 47.



reform of the government or of the church is the work of the professional classes, the lawyers and the clerics social reforms are more direct expressions of popular feeling and appear as new ways of life adopted by certain groups of people or Brotherhoods. The Waldenses in the twelfth, and the Apostolicans in the thirteenth century, are examples of these brotherhoods or communities. In both these cases it is interesting to note how accurately the organisation reproduces the Platonic scheme. The Waldenses were divided into two classes, the "perfect" and the "novices", communism was required among the "perfect" and celibacy was considered the better state, the "novices" provided for the maintenance of the "perfect". The Apostolicans were still more strict in the matter of communism and adopted the habit of calling each other brothers and sisters. The principles, in both cases were regarded as faithfully copying those of the early Christian church, and the relation of those practices to the accepted Christian doctrine of equality is obvious. What Wychffe taught in theory is thus seen to have been an actual practice a century before his time. His doctrine was easily assimilated and applied to daily life by those who were already inclined toward communism. So when the doctrines of Wychffe reached Bohemia they furnished reasons and arguments to support ideas already fermenting in that country. It is now admitted by all writers that the Bohemian movement was no sudden outbreak caused by the ideas of Wychffe. The historian of the later Middle Ages has found that communistic and democratic ideas only develop under certain

conditions; the various battle-cries or distinctive titles that seem to suggest only a difference of creed, or of religious privilege, cover as a rule some other interest no less "religious," because it is also a matter of secular importance. It can hardly be a mere coincidence that all the communistic sects from the twelfth century onwards were composed mainly of weavers; and that the weaving industry was becoming important in Bohemia during the half-century preceding the death of Huss. The character of this occupation seems to have had a direct influence in originating and fostering ideas of a common life, a union of workers for a common stock.

The communistic sects, which were developed out of the original body of Hussites, include the Taborites, of whom some went to the extreme length of abolishing separate marriage and separate family life. The object of this was to abolish poverty by placing the resources of the whole community at the service of each individual. The basis of the system was poverty, but it was so far successful that wealth was soon accumulated, and the society was finally ruined by the development of private property, with the consequent disappearance of equality and fraternity.

The communist movement spread from Bohemia into Germany, and produced the society called Anabaptists. In 1526 there was a large migration of Anabaptists into Moravia, where an elaborate communistic system was developed, and maintained itself for nearly a century. This society compelled every member to relinquish all his possessions; the basis of life was the work of the hands, and all learning was

despised, as a consequence of the common holding of all wealth the private family was abolished, on the other hand, celibacy was denounced (being a tenet of the hated Romish church), and the strictest regulations were enforced to protect the marriage union, and prevent sexual vices. By this combination of opposed ideals, the natural affections were at once fostered and destroyed. The community was organised in households consisting of 400 or 600 persons, the largest amounted to 2000 persons. "They all had but one kitchen, one bakehouse one brew-house, one school, one room for women in child-bed, one room in which the mothers and children were with each other, and so on." As the individual relations were destroyed by this community of life, the real meaning of individual marriage was ignored, and, in fact, the marriages were usually arranged by the official heads of the community. The children were taken from the mother at an early age, were put into the general room, "and grew up strangers to their parents and to all feelings of childhood." The education seems to have been, within its limits, singularly efficient, punishment of children was discouraged, and strict attention paid to order and cleanliness. As a polity this community was democratic, the chief authority was vested in the community as a whole, but a Council of Elders had authority in some matters, and a Bishop was the supreme head, not elected but chosen, ratification of the choice being afterwards obtained from the general assembly.

Such was the society which, more than all others,

*Freedom and other Essays*), and Morley's *Romanes Lecture* (*Miscellanies*, Fourth Series, by John Morley); on Savonarola, Villari: the excellent chapters in the *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. i., should be consulted: the rest of the material may be found in all good histories of the period; on the subject of communism special mention may be made of Kautsky, *Communism in Central Europe in the Time of the Reformation*, an interesting work to which the passages above owe much.

(c) The persistent interest in Macbiavelli is due to the equally persistent problem of "public morality," the distinction between what is right for the individual and what is right for the State: see on this Sidgwick, *Practical Ethics*, p. 53, "Public Morality."

(d) It may be useful to point out that the subject of communism, no less than the name, differs at different times. The Platonic scheme was intended for one class in the State: it was a plan of life for those who must at all costs be removed from the sphere of competition and so be saved from the temptation to regard politics as a job. The communism of the sixteenth century is more distinctively economic and follows the Platonic plan merely because that was an accurate analysis of the necessary elements in any communistic scheme. Another form of communism may best be described as philanthropic, for example that of the Owenites in 1813. The relation of communism in this sense to socialism requires to be worked out carefully.

There is another and totally different use of the word to denote the form of government for which the people of Paris fought in 1871, a system of self-government for the local divisions called *Communes*.

### CHRONOLOGY

The chronology is best studied in such a work as Gooch, *Annals of Politics and Culture*: the following dates are selected to assist the reader in following the topics discussed in the text:—

- 1564 . . . Wier attacks the common belief in witchcraft  
 1572 . . . St Bartholomew's Day, 24th August  
 1573 . . . In France peace is made with the Huguenots this is the period of the party called the Politiques, and of Hotman, author of the Republican treatise called *Franco Gallia*  
 1577 . . . Bodin, *La Republique*  
 1579 . . . The *Vindiciæ Gallicæ* appears ("a philosophical defence of the right of the people to maintain their liberty and their religion against a ruler")  
 1580 . . . Montaigne, *Essays*  
 1594 . . . Hooker writes *Ecclesiastical Polity*  
 1601 . . . Charron, *De la Sagesse*—a treatment of ethics apart from theology Poor Law established as it was till 1834

## [James I.]

- 1603 . . . Althusius, *Politica*  
 1604 . . . Act against witchcraft and revival of proceedings against witches and other magicians  
 1605 . . . Pietism in Germany In England, Bacon writes the *Advancement of Learning*  
 1619 . . . Great hostility toward heretics in France Vanini burned as an atheist Harvey reveals his discovery of the circulation of the blood  
 1620 . . . The Pilgrims of the *Mayflower* land at Plymouth  
 1624 . . . Death of Jacob Boehme, a great mystical writer  
           Lord Herbert begins the history of Deism in England by his work *De Veritate*  
 1625 . . . Grotius, *De Jure Belli*

[Charles I.]

- 1636 . . . Roger Williams banished from Massachusetts : he attempts to found a society in which there is complete religious liberty and separation of Church and State.
- 1644 . . . Milton, *Areopagitica*, followed in 1649 by the *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*.
- 1653-1658 . [Cromwell.]
- 1651 . . . Hobbes' *Leviathan*.
- 1656 . . . Harrington's *Oceana*, a sketch of republican government, influences the progress of democratic ideas.
- 1660-1685 . [Charles II.]
- 1662 . . . The interests of science supported by the founding of a Royal Society in England : the scheme is opposed as "hostile to religion and morality."
- Act of Uniformity.
- 1664 . . . Conventicle Act makes Nonconformist meetings illegal.
- 1670 . . . Spinoza's treatise on the State (*Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*) maintains the liberty of religious thought and criticises the views commonly held as to the authorship of the Pentateuch.
- 1674 . . . Cumberland, *De Legibus Naturæ*.
- 1685-1688 . [James II.]
- 1688 . . . The Revolution. Toleration Act. Locke, *On Toleration*.
- 1690 . . . Locke, *Essay on Human Understanding*.
- 1714 . . . Mandeville, *Fable of the Bees*.
- 1746 . . . Death of Hutcheson, a defender of Shaftesbury and of the doctrine of the inner sense.
- 1749 . . . Hartley, *Observations on Man* : the progress of psychology through the

- Associationist schools is now assisted  
by the connection with physiological  
data
- 1752 Death of Butler Bishop of Durham
- 1776 Death of Hume Adam Smith publishes  
the *Wealth of Nations*
- 1781 Death of Lessing
- 1789 Bentham publishes his *Introduction to  
the Principles of Morals and Legisla-  
tion*
- 1791 Death of John Wesley
- 1804 Death of Kant (b 1724)
- 1836 Death of James Mill the principles of  
the Benthamites begin to produce  
effects in legislation from 1832 John  
Stuart Mill began his career as writer  
after the death of James Mill and  
died in 1873

PART III  
MODERN DEVELOPMENTS



## CHAPTER XII

### THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

§ 1 THE distinctive feature of all modern thought is the position assigned to the individual. Whether we study questions of conduct or of government, we find the literature of the last three centuries dominated by a new idea called individualism. Our first task must therefore be the discovery of the meaning of that term and the best method is the historical.

The speculative thought of every age has centred about its idea of the nature of man, but when this idea is clearly subordinated to some other end and only reached deductively, it has comparatively less significance. The Greeks were to a large extent free from presuppositions in their analysis of human nature, but after Aristotle the naturalistic treatment of morality and politics survived only in "heresies" and the field was occupied primarily by what we may designate as the theological tradition. But Aristotle and naturalism came back together. From the thirteenth century onward, there are symptoms of rebellion against the limits of the theological tradition. One of the rebellious parties was wholly religious in character the Mystics the other was primarily

philosophical, the Nominalists; and to understand their unconscious alliance, we must go back for a moment to earlier doctrines. Roughly speaking, the two outstanding views of the nature of man in the thirteenth century were the Augustinian and the Thomist. The followers of St. Augustine asserted the primacy of the will, while the Thomists supported the view of Thomas Aquinas that the intellect is supreme. The mystics were at first content to adopt the Thomist position, and make their aim a vision of God which was purely rational in character, thus continuing the dogma of the inferiority of the senses; but at a later date the Augustinian idea of an inner experience changed their attitude, and they claimed a direct relationship to God, manifested in *feeling*. This was the individualistic attitude which produced Pietism, influencing Luther in his doctrine of personal salvation through faith, and culminating in the mysticism of Boehme. It is obvious that such tendencies were directly opposed to any hierarchical system, and destined to strengthen a Protestant revolt.

While the religious life of man was thus being re-stated in terms of feeling, the philosophers were moving toward a fresh assertion of individualism in the sphere of knowledge. Here the basis was the senses, and Nominalism prepared the way for a more adequate view of sensation by declaring that universal knowledge is not a knowledge of real universals peculiar to the faculty of reason, but only a generalisation from a number of experiences given through the senses. How far the Nominalists were right or wrong in their treatment of logical problems, does not concern

us at present they enter into our narrative as pioneers in the work of freeing philosophy from authority and so finally making room for the independent study of Nature. They did not actually cause the discovery of new facts still less of new countries but when circumstances provided the new facts there was a natural alliance between their ideas of method and the wider outlook in geography and science. The sphere in which the new idea of method was to prove most fruitful was exactly our present subject the nature of man and here we shall find new methods and new facts continually meeting and as it were embracing each other. For the outcome of Nominalism was sensationalism or empiricism and this was the first phase of the new doctrine of human nature. We leave to the historian of philosophy the problems of knowledge and confine ourselves to the moral and political aspects of the subject.

§ 2 The most noticeable defect in the mediæval traditions is the lack of anthropology or the study of the natural man. the theologian intent upon the soul as the eternal element in man tended to adopt a negative attitude toward the body. The reaction against mediævalism assisted by all that we call humanism went to the opposite extreme and theorists attempted to build the whole fabric of morality and politics on what they supposed to be the natural passions and the natural state of man. The idea which was formed of this nature may best be seen in Hobbes who though not wholly original is historically the founder of modern naturalistic theories. Hobbes owes that position to the extraordinary clearness of his analysis

He does not rely upon observation and induction, but rather upon a kind of mathematical analysis; he is not at all inclined to investigate facts at first hand, but prefers to elaborate a theory, and illustrate it by occasional references to known data. As a triangle can be resolved into lines, and lines into points, so Hobbes resolves the State into individuals, and the individuals into psychological elements. To reconstruct a state, it is necessary to begin from the motive factors in the individual; Hobbes sees, as it were, right through the "great Leviathan," and marks each separate part. Passing over many presuppositions we get a very orderly exposition of human nature. The moving forces are desires, which are essentially organic and not (like the mediæval Reason) a separate and "uncorrupted" activity. For that "Reason," Hobbes really finds no place at all; he admits no break in the chain from sensation to reason, and therefore remains content with "calculative" reason as the highest term: the senses supply the ideas, and the relating and associating of these (atomic) ideas is that work of the mind which we call reasoning. The "Associationism" thus begun was destined to develop at the hands of Locke and his successors. It plays an important part in the development of theories of knowledge, but we are concerned only with its application to the moral problems. If, with Hobbes, we determine to start from immediate feelings and take as our point of interest the adult human being, an inevitable logic leads to the conclusion that a man can only feel his own feelings, that desire must always be for the satisfaction of the self, and the character of action at its lowest level

must therefore be egoistic. We have then to explain how there arises any desire to forego desires for as we know it social life involves restraints. The explanation given by Hobbes is primarily economic: wants can only be adequately satisfied through co-operation and through regulated system. The State of Nature thus gives way to the Reign of Law and the establishment of government regulates the interaction of the primitive egoistic impulses. The defects of this analysis will continue to be seen as we trace the history of the idea of man: at this point it will be advantageous to draw attention to the central features of Hobbes' doctrine. In the first place Hobbes gives clear expression to the new idea that desires are not in themselves good or bad: they are merely motive forces: hence the tendency to condemn them wholesale is checked. Secondly he realises that in all social life there is a degree of strain: a lack of harmony between what the individual desires abstractly and what he is willing to accept as a necessary compromise. Social life is thus regarded as involving a dualism of desire and reason: native tendency and acquired restraint. Competition in ordinary life and open war in the extreme cases show the latent strain between the individual and society. There remains always a degree of strife: there is always in a sense a war of all against all: but in the well-governed community this is kept in check. Here psychologically the will triumphs over desire: we must never forget that Hobbes makes the *will* of the individual produce the very conditions which curb desire: he has no theory of the Will to Power: for in will desire and reason unite and reason controls desire.

§ 3. It is easy to see that this theory is not so bad as it has been represented. The psychology of Hobbes was bound up with moral and political doctrines which roused the fiercest opposition. To a theologian it appeared atheistic; to a political theorist it appeared anti-social; to moralists it appeared degrading. Yet the fundamental proposition was not seriously assailed at first; the doctrine that feeling is the basis of action was firmly established, and the successors of Hobbes maintained this point of view. The first object aimed at was to prove that feelings can be moral in their own right, and attempts were made to establish a distinctive moral sense. Shaftesbury started from the idea of an immediate feeling for the beauty of goodness, and attempted to prove that man has a natural sense for the quality of actions, analogous to the natural feeling of beauty. This type of naturalism had the advantage of being elevated in tone, and therefore less offensive to common sentiments; but it requires no great critical acumen to see that it is either hopelessly individualistic or implies rules of judgment which go beyond the sphere of the senses. Contemporary critics pointed out that it reduced morality to a particular way of being pleased. This line of thought was helpless against cynicism, which developed most strongly among the French theorists. Of these the most important was Bernard de Mandeville, who made a complete division between the moral quality of actions and their social value. The Fable of the Bees had for its subtitle "Private vices, public benefits," and that indicates accurately his position, which he delighted to emphasise the more it proved shocking. The paradox of this

theory rested entirely upon the way in which the terms were handled. Taken in abstraction greed and selfishness and ambition may be regarded as vices, but it is easy to show that these motives lead to economic production, thrift and progress, so that they become the apparent roots of public prosperity. Conversely Mandeville can paint the picture of a society in which no one wanted anything, no one competed against anyone else, and no one ever stifled the sentiment of pity, such a society would clearly be hopelessly stagnant. The theory of Mandeville was pure sophistry but it made men think and it showed once more that previous ideas of the nature of man had been built upon ideals rather than upon direct observation, the extravagant and sentimental condemnation of self-love, pride and self-assertion was shaken by this equally extravagant panegyric, and a great deal of baseless talk about "social affections" was reduced to nothing by this view of life as ruled by the idea of self-preservation and developed under the pressure of individual needs.

§ 4. The perspective of time enables us to see the partial character of these theories. Hobbes was thinking of the political man. Mandeville was talking of the economic man and both were at fault in not grasping the real nature of social man. The first definite contribution to this subject came from Adam Smith. In his time the problem was clearly defined. Self-love was then indisputably established as the moving principle in conduct, and over against it was set Benevolence, or the social factor in consciousness. Shaftesbury included among the primary endowments

of man an element of sympathy or feeling for kin, which affected the individual's approbation or disapprobation of types of conduct. Butler attacked the current theory that morality must be "disinterested," and showed that it was better to be "interested" in goodness, that is to have a direct feeling or desire to further a common good. In every direction there were vague attacks upon the idea that social sentiments are "unnatural" or "artificial," and at the same time a growing consciousness that the old division between feeling and reason could not be maintained as parallel with bad and good actions. It remained for Adam Smith to indicate the right method by showing how individual sentiments arise out of social relations and are formed in and through a social environment. The strength of Adam Smith's position is due to the element of genetic psychology which he introduces. He takes first the purely psychological point that the sight of another's action tends to be a sympathetic state in ourselves. When we imitate the movements of an acrobat, or weep with the distressed heroine, we do not act on a basis of indirect calculation, but through direct feeling for the condition of another. Thus the whole machinery of association is made unnecessary; we do not require to perceive the sorrow of another, associate that idea with our own past or possible future state, and thus generate sympathy. Sympathy is a connatural tendency. In the same way, if one person wrongs another we share the feelings of the injured person and spontaneously desire to give help. In so far as morality demands this feeling for others, and is not merely a question



of custom the old problem is at last solved. Self love and benevolence are by no means reconciled by Adam Smith there is still plenty of room for divergence and for choosing private before public good but the psychological problem has at last been rightly attacked and some attempt been made to demonstrate the process by which the moral consciousness develops out of primary feelings which are not anti-social.

§ 5 The ideas expressed by Adam Smith were no more than a beginning of social psychology. How far they were correct will best be seen by reviewing the later period beginning from Comte. Pure psychology or ideology was not favoured by Comte but he recognised the significance of social psychology and was an admirer of Adam Smith. Comte finally reached a position in which he united the idea of society as grounded in the psychological endowments of the individual with the idea of the individual as the product of society. Feeling sympathy and a social instinct are the points upon which he concentrates his attention. Thus Comte's positivist philosophy handed on the tradition of the Scottish school. In this way the analysis of the social individual developed into a psychological view of society and sociology was committed to a consideration of the mental traits of races. The literature of the last twenty five years abounds with studies of national psychology and works on Folk psychology. This phylogenetic branch of the subject has been supplemented by an ontogenetic treatment of which the works of Prof Baldwin are typical instances. The subject is too

large to be treated here, and we desire only to indicate the progress which has ended in the definite recognition of social psychology; for the rest we shall content ourselves with a statement of the ethical significance of this attitude.

In the first place, the very existence of a genetic psychology and a psychology of child life is highly significant. When we look back upon the history of psychology in its relation to social ideas or ethical norms, we notice at once the absence of ideas that do not concern the adult consciousness. One after another the writers on moral sentiments ignore the processes by which the mind is formed, and begin with a typical, fully developed citizen. Even after the idea of explaining social conditions by reference to the "childhood of man" was becoming popular, the field of individual development was ignored. Hume and Butler both threw out hints that education was the source of moral ideas, but they lacked the fine sense for influences acting indirectly upon the growing self which characterised Plato's teaching. The required inspiration came from the doctrine of evolution, and, fresh light being shed upon the process of individual growth, there has resulted a new attitude toward many problems.

(a) The central doctrine of morality has always been the reality of conscience. In its crudest form the doctrine asserts a complete innate knowledge of right and wrong. This aspect of the "innate ideas" was attacked by Locke, who desired to prove that the whole content of the mind was acquired through experience. In spite of Butler's attempt to restate the

doctrine of conscience a special moral sense, the standpoint of the empirical school steadily won adherents, and the outcome was J S Mill's definition of conscience as an "accumulated mass of feeling." This definition satisfied two distinct requirements. It explained, on the one hand how the content of conscience could vary with different times and places, on the other hand it preserved that character of immediacy which is an undoubted fact of experience and had been wrongly translated into "intuitive knowledge" or misunderstood as an activity of the pure reason. Mill did not support this view by any detailed examination of the processes which form this "mass of feeling," and his position was therefore incomplete. The natural history of conscience was left for others to describe.

(b) In spite of its inadequacy Mill's doctrine may be taken to mark the end of the earlier doctrine of conscience as a special "faculty" which theologians had defended ever since Cicero spoke of the "God in us," or other adapters of Stoicism represented it as a supernatural element in man. The practical consequence of this was an extension of the idea that all morality can be treated scientifically. If such is the case, immorality can also be regarded scientifically, and we have as the next important development the beginning of a psychology of crime. This is again a symptom of a new view of morality. So long as every individual was regarded as essentially rational, crime was consistently viewed as expressing the will to be evil. But the scientific view of it sets over against that notion the idea of action as dependent

upon physiological structure and psychological growth. Just as insanity ceased after a time to be regarded as a dæmonic "possession," so crime has ceased to be regarded as the wilful yielding to the promptings of the Devil. Insanity and crime have tended to acquire affinities in proportion as science has shown that man is not possessed of an inner light which always shines undimmed over the chaos of desires. When the attention of psychologists was turned from this fiction of intellect as the peculiar property of man, and it was seen that man was, in a very real sense, "animal" as well as "rational," the desires and the feelings were once again treated as the fundamental driving forces, and the difference between the good and the bad man was more correctly stated as a difference of degree in civilisation, rather than an absolute distinction due to an act of creation or the Fall of Man.

§ 6. This fundamental change of attitude has been brought about by many co-operating factors. One of these was the geographical expansion of the known world and the consequent discovery of men who were normally below the level of European civilisation. We see this factor appearing in Locke. The appeal to the evidence of travellers is an appeal to the "savage," regarded as a being created by God and yet wholly ignorant of the accepted religious or moral doctrines, a proof therefore that civilisation is not inherent but acquired. In times of peace and in well-governed countries it is easy to regard the murderer as a wanton aggressor, openly setting himself against the social order whose goodness, being rational, was regarded

as necessarily obvious to all rational beings. But acquaintance with less developed societies shows us man in the making, it opens our eyes to the fact that there is a *making*. At first, in the seventeenth century, the "savage" is clearly regarded as a freak—a negative instance, the "wild man of the woods" is a curiosity, but in no long time he is taken seriously and awakens scientific curiosity. Henceforth the fixed idea of man, derived from the polite writings which were concerned only with respectable people and showed a genteel dislike for the "debased," gives way to a new and wider view. Humanity no longer being divided between the naturally good and the naturally bad, it was possible for medical science to produce some effect upon the established views of morality. Here came in the influence of researches into "suggestion" as allied to hypnotism, with the whole question of sub-conscious factors in volition. The act of volition, treated as a decision dependent upon organic and external conditions could no longer be described as an isolated assertion of the self—an act of self-determination unconnected even with its own possible motives. The whole doctrine of the will became so to say, more fluid—the problems which in a former age logically produced the idea of predestination were now solved by a fuller recognition of the moral significance of a still older view, that man neither lives nor dies to himself.

It is not possible to do more than indicate the beginnings of these various new lines of thought, all vitally affecting our idea of man and all tending to remove for ever those brief and formal definitions

upon which so many elaborate systems have at different times been built. Anthropology, sociology, criminology, genetic psychology,—these and many other new terms indicate an increased richness of thought; such words as suggestion, psychology of the crowd, imitation, are daily growing in significance, and we can only introduce them as signs of all that is here omitted. But on account of its historical interest, and because we have met it in Plato and in Adam Smith, a little space must be given to the idea of imitation.

To understand the full meaning of the term "imitation" we must go back to Plato and consider what he meant by the word *Mimesis* (μίμησις). Plato introduces his view of imitation into his account of education, not as in any sense prescribing a course of "imitation," but by way of explaining how the mind actually becomes formed. For Plato the outstanding problem is that of goodness and badness; the question of making people *social* does not naturally occur to one who was more inclined to feel the force than the feebleness of social constraint. In the City-State there was little fear of anyone drifting out of his social environment; the spirit of the community surrounded him as the air he breathed. These conditions explain the natural way in which Plato takes for granted the fact of social unity, and how for him it is natural to make the fully developed citizen or the community itself one source of his psychology. The point of greatest interest in Plato is the fact that he realised the full significance of the State and the individual, so far as concerns their fundamental

unity and differences. The individual grows up to the full stature of the citizen by slowly assimilating the ideas that are expressed in the customs and institutions around him. But of course the individual must *assimilate* these ideas. It is not enough to be merely sensible; one must have activity as well as passivity; one must not only be susceptible but must also react. The susceptibility and the tendency to react are usually united; the high spirited child has more of both and consequently requires more care than the impassive and inactive. The quick intellect notices the actions and gestures of others; is fond of displaying its powers of copying; and so tends to be continually reproducing the conduct of those whom it observes. This reproduction or representation is really identical with the actor's art; it is the adoption of a character without any accompanying distinction between the idea of self and the idea of the part that is being played. And so as the mind grows and loses its plasticity these actions tend to become the actor's very nature. Practice we say makes perfect; and this is most true of those silent processes of copying which finally make the most permanent tendencies of our natures. In this way Plato states what we should now call the genetic aspect of mental development. Brought up among examples of vice the mind becomes habituated to crime; accustomed to loftier ideals it becomes law abiding; an oligarchy produces oligarchic minds and a democracy makes its future citizens democratic. Imitation is for Plato a fundamental notion because it means a tendency to copy the kinds of

action we find around us, and by this process of reproduction to form our own characters.

The difference between Plato and Adam Smith is directly related to the difference between the City-State and the modern type of civil society. Plato was laying down rules for the control of social influences. Adam Smith was trying to explain how there can be any unity of individuals whose interests were described, at the time, as necessarily opposed. Plato takes for granted the unity of society; Adam Smith sets himself to explain its possibility. Plato speaks merely of the intellectual life, *feeling and reason combined*; Adam Smith confines himself to the "sentiments," regarding them as a natural basis in distinction from the reason. For reason seemed to lead either to selfish calculation or to an artificial unity based on conscious self-repression; it was necessary, at that time, to try to *prove* the possibility of natural unity of interests. The theory did not progress far, but it was a beginning. Adam Smith at least went far enough to see that the explanation of common interests must begin below the surface of conscious calculation and penetrate to the natural tendency on the part of all individuals to reproduce the actions and ideas of those around them. It is interesting to see how Adam Smith follows Plato's main thought and uses examples that involve the idea of acting a part. "The mob," he says, when they are gazing at a dancer on the slack rope, "naturally writhe and twist and balance their own bodies as they see him do, and as they feel that they themselves must do if in his situation." Here, and throughout his treatment of what he calls "sympathy,"



Adam Smith successfully proves that there is a fundamental participation in the feelings of others, and so far he achieves his purpose, namely, to refute the idea that fellow-feeling is always derivative and depends on a calculation of resulting advantages. But the theory remains within those limits and consequently never becomes an adequate analysis of the relation between individual development and social unity. To achieve that it is necessary to go back to Plato's idea that the mind unintentionally seizes upon, assimilates, and reproduces the social life in which it is rooted.

This work has been done in recent years by those sociologists who have adopted the belief that sociology is fundamentally a science of the social mind. These writers belong to a period that lies beyond our scope, but the valuable elements of their teaching are so far akin to the Greek idea of a social "organism" that we may be allowed to indicate a few points. The central purpose of this latest development of theory is not to overcome the distinction between "self" and "others," but to show why that distinction ought never to have been made. In other words, its purpose is to show that the eighteenth century worked with a false idea of the "self", that its tendency to avoid man and society was due to a lack of genetic method, that the genetic method of study shows us a reciprocal action of individuals which, as it is a vital process, produces "selves" which have from the first assimilated the tendency to refer to "others," and are thus social in their very fibre and nature. It is necessary to recall the former warning against *confusing* the idea of being social with the idea of goodness. The eighteenth-

century writers understood by a social nature the type of mind which works for a common good, is "disinterested," and so far moral. In a psychological theory the ethical reference is superfluous; psychological terms are neutral, and the psychological idea of the "social self" does not include the (moral) idea of values.

The psychologist treats imitation as a natural tendency to copy, without considering whether good or bad actions are copied. He employs the idea of "suggestion" and finds the sphere of crime especially fruitful in examples of action due to suggestion. He recognises, as the antithesis of this, the complementary forces; for example, some lead and others follow, some suggest and others are subject to suggestion, some tend more to adopt current modes of action, while others incline to invent or originate. Both the complementary forces are found together in the majority of normal individuals, for we are all engaged partly in reproducing, partly in recombining the forms of behaviour which are the objects of our attention. In thus dealing with the dynamic principles of conduct the psychologist claims to be merely scientific, an investigator of the actual forces that make the individual and the group what they respectively become. As a scientific inquiry psychology claims to be what Aristotle made it, a theory of those forces which result in conduct and should be studied by the political theorist in preparation for law-making. It is particularly in the formation of penal codes and the practical work of controlling groups of individuals that, from Bentham onwards, this psychology has proved valuable. For the specula-

tive mind it has a further value in that it at least tends to prove a natural basis for social union and an inherent solidarity in human society.

## APPENDIX

(a) The subject of this chapter should be followed out historically before studying the latest doctrines. The works referred to are primarily Hobbes *Leviathan*, bk 1, Adam Smith, *Theory of the Moral Sentiments*, Hume, *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* (including Appendix II), Butler, *Sermons*, I-III, Mill, *Utilitarianism*, chap III.

The view taken of this historical development of doctrine by Spencer is instructive, in the *Data of Ethics*, chap VII, he formulates the reconciliation between intuitionists and evolutionists. The idea that there was a development of conscience in the individual was put forward by Hume (*Enquiry*, sec V pt 1) and by Butler (*Analogy*, pt. 1 chap V), but their idea of development shows no recognition of racial development, and so falls short of an evolutionary treatment.

(b) Social psychology has developed rapidly in recent years. Works on sociology usually contain statements of the accepted doctrines, e.g. Giddings, *Principles of Sociology*. Such works hardly go beyond the psychological basis implied in a "sense of kinship" (cp above on Aristotle, p 98). A more elaborate treatment is given by M'Dougall, *An Introduction to Social Psychology*, see especially chaps IV and XV. A more extensive study of the subject would include the works of Tarde (*Laws of Imitation, Social Laws*), Baldwin, *Social and Ethical Interpretations*, and Bosanquet's *Philosophical Theory of the State*. The last is important as stating a theory of apperception, offered as a substitute for imitation and more directly related to the Platonic view. The transition from the earlier to the later phase of this subject is seen in Mill's

*Logic*, Bk. vi., which shows the influence of Comte and the beginning of a scientific treatment of character (Ethology) and social consciousness.

(c) The relation of new discoveries and new views of man to the general character of ethical and political thought still requires to be fully examined. I should like to acknowledge here the help given me by the address of the President (Prof. J. L. Myres) to the British Association, Anthropological Section (1909). That attempt to connect the discovery of "wild men" and other anthropological data with social and political ideas, is the only essay of the kind known to me. Such data obviously had a great effect on Hobbes and on Locke. Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* is the literary presentation of that new material, which appears also in Shakespeare's delineation of Caliban.

(d) The influence of Nominalism is worth notice. That name usually stands for a mediæval doctrine now regarded as extinct so far as concerns its original significance. But the historical interest of that doctrine belongs to its spirit. Mysticism was an effective opposition to authority in religion. "But it is not here that we must look for the most significant reaction; rather in the movements of Nominalism, which partly in the interests of more practical piety, partly in the interests of the particular (as opposed to the universal), partly in a well-grounded conviction of the fallibility of human judgment, withdraws one by one the truths of dogma from the sphere of Reason, and tends to that separation of the domain of practical and speculative knowledge which to-day marks modern thought" (F. W. Bussell, *Christian Theology and Social Progress*, Bampton Lecture, 1905, p. 11). I quote this passage as an excellent summary of the real effect of Nominalism as that is shown in the sixteenth century.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE POLITICAL ASPECT OF CONDUCT

§ 1 THE actual course of events during the Middle Ages had for its outcome the establishment of a condition under which all men had rights. In theory therefore every one had not only a claim upon the State for the opportunities of free development but also the actual power of obtaining support and protection from the State. But in practice this ideal was not realised the world was not made fit for the ideal type of conduct. The first requirement was a form of government which would admit the exercise of rights, and it was equally clear that the liberty which this implies would have to coexist with restraint.

We have seen how the possibility of anarchy arising out of Protestantism had troubled Luther<sup>1</sup>. Before his time it was usually felt that the existence of a ruler created *ipso facto* the duty of submission. This view the Reformers undermined making way for the later and better view that the nature of human society involves restraint and demands a rule if not a ruler. Before the new attitude could be made clear there was much to be done in the way of defining terms

<sup>1</sup> Cp p 217

Political treatises were much concerned with the question whether a tyrant may or may not be killed, and the modern reader grows weary of a subject which seems lacking in point.<sup>1</sup> But the real purpose of the discussions was to clear up the idea of rule and to distinguish between the right and the wrong type of ruler. By tyrant is meant one who, having power enforces submission, and as there is no moral obligation to obey, there is also no moral sin in opposition. The king or prince who is not a "tyrant" is one who rules in virtue of a right to rule conferred on him by his people, and against such a ruler there cannot be a moral right of resistance. This point is expressed in the doctrine of Calvin, according to which resistance can be allowed only on the part of representatives of the people or in cases where the act of the ruler is contrary to divine command. It was soon apparent that the attempts to limit individual action by such arguments were futile: but the failure in this respect was fully compensated by the fact that men came to realise that the fundamental problem of government was not an abstract question of politics but a question of conduct. From the fifteenth century onward we can trace clearly the decline of the feeling that governments stand above the people and represent an independent force which holds them down: on the contrary, it becomes clearer at every stage that an established rule is the hall-mark of civilisation and that the individual owes to his government all that it enables him to become.

Luther represents the Protestantism of Germany.

<sup>1</sup> Cp. p. 203.

The next great battle was that of the French Protestants, the Huguenots. The political thinking by which their position was defined all tends toward the support of constitutional government. We might well expect the most extreme views from people who suffered so much in the cause of liberty, but in fact we find no tendency to demand either complete freedom from control or even a democratic form of government. The theorists themselves did not belong to the proletariat, nor did they feel any respect for the people as such. They did not demand that the people should have power, but only that the ruler should aim at the good of the whole community. We may say at once that all the most influential writers of the sixteenth century argued for the rule of an enlightened aristocracy rather than any purely democratic form of government.

In England the main line of political speculation begins from Hooker, who definitely makes use of the idea of a contract to explain the relation of the ruler to the ruled. Hooker lived in Holland and was directly influenced by the spectacle of liberty and prosperity which that country afforded him. It is not too much to say that the living example of the Dutch nation did more for the advance of England than any arguments. The English are not inclined to accept theoretical conclusions without tangible proofs, but when, as in the case of the Dutch, theory seemed to be guaranteed by facts, this natural conservatism was overcome. In 1603 the Dutch writer Althusius propounded a theory of government that was for the first time essentially democratic and went back,

both in ideas and in language, to the Greek models. Althusius regards the State as a commonwealth which begins from a compact and is maintained for the general good: the head of this organisation is a magistrate who has associated with him the ephors, literally his "overseers": the people and the ephors are greater than the magistrate and his power is limited by them. Nothing could be more democratic in spirit than this, but such was the condition of the masses that Althusius does not seem to have contemplated giving them any real power: the individuals who occupy the offices in his State are those who have position and influence, and his scheme was intended to be aristocratic in its actual working. A second Dutch writer, Grotius, indirectly assisted the progress of liberal views by his treatise *De Jure Belli*, a work on international law that brought into further prominence the ideas of natural law and natural reason. At a later date Hobbes wrote that "London and other towns of traders, having in admiration the great prosperity of the Low Countries, after they had revolted from their monarch, were inclined to think the like change of government here would produce the like prosperity."<sup>1</sup> These were in fact the influences that culminated in the Revolution of 1688.

Apart from its actual prosperity and its democratic tendency in politics, Holland was notoriously the land of liberty in religious matters<sup>2</sup> and of freedom in speech. In England the same cause found an able champion in Milton, who from 1644 onward pleaded

<sup>1</sup> Gooch, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> For the religious development see p. 290.



especially for freedom of speech freedom in private affairs, and a constitutional form of government. In Milton the essence of political obligation is made distinctively moral all power lies in the hands of the people who have the right to depose a good ruler and the duty of deposing a bad one. In this theory the doctrine of natural rights is carried to its furthest extreme at an earlier date the doctrine might have seemed chimerical but Milton's statement of it appeared just when the English nation had put it into practice by the execution of Charles.

The death of Charles the First was an event of profound significance. It was a shock to those who had not realised the possibility of such a development, and it raised in a practical form the question whether a civil society can continue without an absolute authority. This was the question which Hobbes set himself to answer and the outcome of his analysis of government is that the liberty of all can only be assured by absolute submission to the sovereign. Hobbes does not commit himself to the position that the sovereign must be a person in the ordinary sense that is an absolute monarch. He uses the term sovereign to signify a person in the legal sense, a body corporate having a legal status whether numerically one or more than one. This sovereign whether king council or cabinet is constituted sovereign by the act of the people in making the contract which first established the government. By that act every natural right (save one) was surrendered to be received again as civil rights at the will of the ruler. Hobbes doubtless had a real bias toward monarchy.

He was writing "between the execution of the king and the execution of the parliament." Anarchy was once more the most threatening danger. But, in spite of that, Hobbes only commits himself to a theory of sovereignty and uses for this purpose the weapon of the anti-monarchical party, the contract theory. The importance of the contract theory as stated by Hobbes lies entirely in the fact that it is no longer encumbered by the attempt to give it historical value; Hobbes does not justify government by historical precedent but by logical analysis; the contract theory in his hands is nothing but a way of saying that the individual submits voluntarily to be governed because experience has already taught him that lack of government is infinitely worse. So far there could be no objection to the standpoint, but this apology for government was so stated that it involved two other points: it seemed on the one hand to make government artificial and opposed to the natural inclinations of men, while on the other hand it vested all rights in the sovereign and put the sovereign completely out of touch with the people. Two modifications were admitted by Hobbes: the individual retained the right of self-preservation, and the sovereign remained subject to the laws of nature and responsible to God.<sup>1</sup> Neither of these qualifications was sufficiently developed: self-preservation meant the bare right to live, whereas in practice men claim not only a right to live but a right to live well; and responsibility to God is an adequate con-

<sup>1</sup> Cp. above, p. 203, where the beginning of this line of thought is seen.

trol of a sovereign only if some external power (e.g. the Pope) enforced the religious law or the people were able to depose an immoral ruler. As Hobbes made the State supreme over the Church, and did not actually provide any means for controlling sovereigns, these *modifications of tyranny can only be regarded as formal*. But in spite of these defects Hobbes stated his case with so much real insight that his position was, and still is, the classic exposition of two fundamental truths, that public and private interests never quite coincide so as to remove all friction between ruler and ruled, and that there must be one, and only one, central power or fount of justice in any given State. This latter point we can leave, merely remarking that it was essentially a denial of the possibility of admitting any appeal from the territorial jurisdiction to some other power, in other words from king to pope. On the former point there is much to say. Hobbes is clear in his rejection of all rights (over and above self-preservation) except as derived from the State. There is, according to him, no natural law, no natural justice, and no natural morality, conduct, where there is no government, is pure egoism, justice is not an innate principle and men are only saved from the state of perpetual antagonism by the fear of the ruler.

Hobbes could appeal to high authority for support. His "state of nature" is not essentially different from the state of "original sin," and the theologians of an earlier date had consistently maintained that the civil order only existed on account of the sinful nature of man. But he was the object of bitter

attacks from theological writers, because the essence of his teaching was naturalistic at a time when orthodox opinion was allied with rationalism. Hobbes was an extremist, but he had shown unanswerably that no rule of conduct could be permanently maintained in theory unless it was shown to be actually a moving force in life; theory must henceforth look to man for its basis, and acknowledge that morality is either contrary to his nature or can be stated in terms of his natural inclinations.

§ 2. Consideration of this last point led to a new position. The real defect of the *Leviathan* was the failure to recognise the distinction between a state and a society. Hobbes treated the State as a purely political organisation, in which the only real link between man and man was the fact of obedience to one ruler. This was a superficial view due to an overzealous opposition to the growing sense of individuality; and, with his eye on the struggle between communities and the tricks of diplomacy, Hobbes saw in each individual a self-contained unit that must necessarily collide with the other units if no other higher power controlled them all. A correction of this view is found in Locke, who agrees with Hobbes in his doctrine of a "state of nature" and a "contract," but gives a different interpretation of both. Locke thinks that man was not at first unsociable, but that in the state of nature rights of property were recognised, and there was a natural tendency to observe the principles of justice. At this stage there was a recognition of equality, meaning by equality "the equal right that every man hath to his natural freedom

without being subjected to the will or authority of any other man ' Clearly Locke is trying to get away from the absolute submission implied in Hobbes in other words he is making room for that right of rebellion which was exercised in 1688 In one point Locke makes an advance from the position of Hobbes, he is able to represent law as an increase of liberty rather than a surrender of it He also makes the people the only source of legislative power, which involves the important point that a nation cannot be bound by an agreement made once for all or indeed by any previous contract which it no longer desires to maintain The question might well be asked if the state of nature was so ideal as Locke represents it, why did people ever abandon it? Locke has to maintain that the civil state is better than the state of nature and in so doing he concedes most of the evils which Hobbes ascribes to the state of anarchy This, however merely serves to show that the "state of nature" was an idea that had served its purpose and might be discarded

When the egoistic idea of man was thus in part overcome, there emerged a new view of the limits of obligation Justice the virtue of fulfilling obligations was defined by Hobbes as the "keeping the covenants made" When we come to Hume, this contract theory of government has been replaced by the idea of a social contract a tacit agreement between individuals to live and let live In Hume the notion of Justice widens out to include all relations between individuals in respect of property meaning by property all that can be possessed, and by right of possession can be

kept from another. Here the sphere of justice is limited to the objects of competition, and it is evident that the central interest for Hume is not so much the political as the economic regulation of society. Thus the political community, of which Hobbes thought primarily, now develops two other phases, a moral and an economic, treated together by Adam Smith. This was a step nearer the complete understanding of society, but at this stage there seems to be too sharp a distinction between social and economic facts. In the sphere of economics the most obvious thing is the part played by competition, and the tendency to regard this as a kind of war leads to the idea that in trade all men act from selfish motives limited only by laws which they will evade when possible. Thus the attitude of Hobbes seems to be justified in this sphere, not only as a true statement of facts, but as a statement of what ought to be. The economic theory postulates the desire to possess; in satisfying their desires, men create that demand which others, also in their own interest, will supply. In this sphere it seems as though purely non-moral factors are alone required, and a non-moral view of society accordingly gains ground. Here was the justification for Mandeville's position, condemned in its day as "shocking," but in reality only an exaggerated statement of this crude view of economic relations.<sup>1</sup> The State now loses any claim it may have had to be an "association for the highest good," and is declared to have for its primary function the provision of security, and the progress of society is

<sup>1</sup> Cp. p. 240.

represented as depending upon the removal of all hindrances to the free play of natural passions especially the passion of acquisition. Mandeville draws a vivid picture of the condition to which society would be reduced if men aimed only to give way to one another, and to increase the prosperity of others rather than their own. One important point is made by both Mandeville and Hume against the sentimentalists who tried to support morality by the idea of the "human family", they both point out that family affection does not spread indefinitely, the man who has to struggle in support of a family is more ready to take advantage of others than the individual who has only himself to care for. The egoism of these writers is therefore not the same as the egoism of primitive man, it is rather that struggle for existence which economics may take as a real and valuable factor while moralists condemn it as a vice. For this unfortunate position the moralists had only themselves to thank. In previous ages the Church had definitely checked economic activity, the times were now changed and with enlarged freedom of action there was a clearer recognition that independent striving after material prosperity is not essentially bad. The transition period from the rigidity of earlier thought to the more rational view of economic matters, was marked by an unnecessary reticence about the facts of the struggle for life, and this reticence was easily satirised as hypocrisy.

§ 3 The central idea of the new attitude toward conduct was expressed in the term utility. The growth of individualism required both a justification and a

limit. The moral order could no longer be interpreted through the idea of a law of God unless that law was made consistent with the idea of the good as it was understood through the free action of reason. Reason requires that moral good should be identified with happiness, and that moral conduct should not be at variance with natural instincts. It was argued that the desire for happiness is itself given by God, and therefore has a claim to recognition; the advocates of natural theology added that a scheme of the universe which does not ultimately involve a union of happiness with goodness cannot be reconciled with the idea of a benevolent creator. Optimism then triumphed. By Shaftesbury the moral ideal was identified with the full and free development of human capacities, especially the enjoyment of æsthetic pleasures. But the good could not be defined solely as an æsthetic ideal; the normal individual was not endowed with the refinement which Shaftesbury, a highly educated aristocrat, seemed to think innate in most men. On the contrary, morality must be a matter of rule rather than a matter of taste; restraint was required, and this was introduced by specifying that the good must be shared by all; the happiness for which men ought to strive was defined as universal—the greatest good of the greatest number. That definition, once evolved, carried with it the implied right to limit individual action in the interests of society. Utilitarianism thus definitely stated the rights of society as superseding the cruder idea of the rights of man, and in the interests of this social ideal Bentham laid it down that "man has no rights." To understand this somewhat enigmatic



proposition it will be necessary to pause and consider the history of the phrase rights of man

§ 4 The phrase rights of man was the watchword of those who advocated liberty and self government The philosophic doctrine of rights found in and after the sixteenth century had its origin in the desire to define government through Reason rather than Authority A rational explanation differs from an historical justification in laying emphasis on the obvious correctness of its premisses not on the age of the precedents to which history appeals But the ordinary man is more easily moved by the appeal to precedent than by argument to persuade him that an innovation is really the restoration of a primitive condition of affairs is to win his hearty if blind adherence So a theory which is really rational and analytic usually goes forth to the public arrayed in precedents This was the case with the rights of man Those who arrived at the conclusion that man has rights tried in many cases to prove that these rights were not only natural and obvious to reason but had actually been the foundation of an earlier state of nature In this way the idea of individual rights was united with two quite distinct ideas those of a primitive state of and of a universal law of nature The former idea was to be found in the writings of antiquity and came from the Sophists through the Stoics into Latin literature The latter idea was brought into prominence by Grotius who by a fortunate misunderstanding<sup>1</sup> converted the Roman legal system called Jus Gentium or Law of Nations into a scheme of international

<sup>1</sup> Ritchie *Natural Rights* p 37

law. This interpretation was in fact partially justified by history, since in practice the Law of Nations had tended to be more *universal* in application and construction than the Law of Citizens. It was natural to see in a law applicable to various peoples, or in the laws which regulated commerce, a formulation of common obligations, and to think that these would coincide with the elementary rights of man.

This historical background did not in fact serve as the real starting-point of the doctrine of rights. Hobbes used the idea of a state of nature to prove that man has no rights against the State when once that is established. But Thomas Aquinas had made a distinction between the revealed law of God and that part of law which has not been revealed, but is discovered by reason, a sort of progressive revelation. Locke, following Hooker, makes a similar use of reason, and bases on this idea of rational principles discoverable by man his defence of the right to resist an established government. In this way the reason was made a principle of political thought, and was no longer confined to theology (as in Thomas Aquinas) or to juristic doctrines (as in Grotius).

Circumstances assisted this movement, for in 1766 the Declaration of Independence gave a definite statement of the rights, and it has been remarked that the Bill of Rights of Virginia (June 12, 1766) was based on "primal principles," and moved from a "narrow altercation about facts to the contemplation of immutable truth." Here the direct intention of declaring rights on the basis of reason is quite clear, and there is no pseudo-historical basis. The next great movement,

the French Revolution, was influenced by Rousseau and the fictions of a state of nature and of natural rights furnished emotional additions to the plain work of Reason. The position of Rousseau was peculiarly complex. As regards the individual he fully admits that the Civil State is required to keep in check the animal nature of man, so far inclining to the view of Hobbes that the state of nature is unendurable. But at the same time Rousseau maintains that the actual political conditions are unnatural that there is consequently a better kind of life which is predominantly natural and this better government of man is the true state of nature. If this is further defined it becomes identical with a hypothetical Golden Age in which men were ruled by the natural principles of liberty equality, and fraternity. Rousseau, in spite of this fiction is really a supporter of Reason, a destroyer only of the vicious government of the French aristocracy, and an advocate of free government not of freedom from government. In view of later developments and the anarchism of the French Revolution this must be remembered. The actual political experiment of 1789 was only a digression, the real development of Rousseau's position is to be seen in the later history of France, in English liberalism, and in the philosophy of Hegel.

Rousseau has been so influential in the history of modern ideas of the State and modern ideas of true citizenship that a word or two must be added to this brief statement. Rousseau's opposition to aristocratic rule arose from direct experience and led to the assertion that government must be put on a

wider basis. Rousseau does not advocate a return to nature; he regards government as an advance on that; but at the same time he maintains that the state of nature was not a state of war, it was rather the uncorrupted condition of equality. The source of evil is the possession of property through which men are led to abandon the state of nature and evolve an artificial social system. One mark of this system is the absence of the feeling of pity, which in the natural state leads to mutual help. This is a most significant point in Rousseau's reconstruction of the idea of conduct; his romanticism and advocacy of natural sentiments is a phase of his belief that sympathy between man and nature, or man and man, could be made the regenerating force in a society grown shallow, unpractical, and flippant. The republican principle which is implied in this attitude would serve to humanise the interests of the aristocracy, and at the same time develop a sense of responsibility and self-respect among the masses. The practical dangers which arise from giving all power to the majority were foreseen by Rousseau and led him to distinguish between a "general will" and the sum of individual wills. If the individuals meet together to express their will, each one may vote for what he wants or for what he thinks best. In the former case the result is merely an accidental unity due to similarity of desires; in the latter there is a real unity due to the fact that there exists a common good which common reason discovers. This distinction is very sound as a criticism of types of conduct; but in supposing that the second result

would be attained Rousseau tacitly assumes that each individual realises in himself two distinct tendencies, one for private and one for public good and also, that he chooses the latter. The result, then, is that Rousseau recognises the time honoured distinction of self love and benevolence, that in opposition to Hobbes he deliberately maintains that benevolence will be victorious as in the state of nature, kindly feelings predominated. This type of political doctrine is expressed by the English utilitarians when they demand the subjection of private interest to the greatest good of the greatest number, but they have not the same degree of optimism, and we may perhaps see a difference of national temper in the comparatively slow and cautious steps taken by the English school in furthering their doctrines.

§ 5 The contract theory was rejected by Hume, and not only rejected but also denounced by Burke. The outcome of the whole matter was the recognition that political society does not arise from a contract, but there is at all times a tacit contract between members of a political society which each member accepts to some extent by the mere fact of remaining in, and enjoying the benefits of a social unity. Society, thus regarded is a free union of individuals who make their membership a reality just so far as they realise their responsibilities. Here we may return to the British doctrine of political ethics and consider the reasons which led Montesquieu to value it so highly.

If we return for a moment to the middle of the

eighteenth century we find a line of political thought very different from that of Rousseau. Montesquieu attempted a definition of liberty which was free from the idea that perfect liberty is incompatible with differences in the State. Rousseau neglected the possibilities of representative government, and thereby put himself out of touch with the practical requirements of large communities. Montesquieu, on the other hand, would not prescribe any form of government as universally the best; for him that government is best which best suits the people who live under it. This view seems too flexible to be helpful, but in one respect it emphasises an important point. Montesquieu sees that a form of government represents rather than makes the temper of a people. For this reason there can be no absolute control over the succession of governments in a community; the aristocracy will cease to hold its own just so soon as the principles which made it supreme fall into decay; a democracy will be liable to corruption in the same manner, and with the loss of its particular "virtue" will cease to maintain itself. In this view we see again the doctrine of Plato that the vitality of governments is in the "ethos" of the governors; so long as the principles are uncorrupted any class might rule with success, or the whole people might rule. But corruption comes, and the only way to avert the day of catastrophe seems to be a balance of interests, the "mixed constitution" of the classical politics. In the English constitution Montesquieu thought he had found the living ideal, probably because he desired above all things to reform the French aristo-

cratic government, and regarded the English government as essentially the government of a reformed and liberal aristocracy. In Montesquieu there is that vein of conservatism which was characteristic of English political thought, and most conspicuously absent in the progress of the French Revolution. The crucial problem of government from Bentham onwards, is that which arises directly out of the admission that a people must be in some sense self governing namely, the problem of the relation between the majority and the minority, or more broadly, the right of anyone to control anyone else. Liberalism, in committing itself to the kindred doctrines that government aims at the good of the whole community and that the broadest possible basis for government must be sought, also commits itself to the practical difficulty that the people must govern themselves before they can be fit for government. Into the practical points arising out of that we need not enter, our present interest is merely to determine what principles of conduct are implied in that republicanism which seems to be the inevitable consequence of progress and enlightenment.

The events of 1789 were received in England with a burst of rapturous applause. The enthusiasm for liberty, which was never entirely wanting among the English was rising to a state of delirium when Burke came forward to denounce the "anarchic fallacies" of his contemporaries. The actual events of the year 1789 seemed to Burke a prophetic revelation of what might come from the over development of popular government. Reflection upon the tragic end of the

French nobility increased the conservatism of Burke's nature, and finally produced a reaction against liberalism, but that reaction came too late to alter the significance of his life's work. Burke expounds a view of social justice which must always be valuable, because history showed him in no uncertain colours the contrasts of progress and extravagance, democracy and anarchy. Burke took for his central dogma the belief that the object of government is the good of the people. Against an effete aristocracy, devoted to the preservation of privileges, he laboured continuously to establish the idea of government for the masses. But he had no sympathy with the idea of a government conducted by the masses ; his opposition to democracy and support of an enlightened aristocracy as the governing caste is thoroughly Hellenic in tone : it was also out of date. In popular government Burke sees nothing but the beginning of anarchy, and all his sympathy is with law and order. Yet he can say unhesitatingly that the people have no interest in disorder, that they are usually right in their demands, and that every political measure must be judged at the bar of Reason. Burke is, in fact, never far from the central principles of the French Revolutionists. He takes reason to be the test of right government, and thereby rejects all appeals to " established rights " when these cannot show reasons for their existence. He openly adopts the idea of utility as a guiding principle in affairs of State, and speaks the language of Bentham when he says " the question with me is not whether you have a right to render your people miserable, but whether it is not your



interest to make them happy" In short, Burke upheld the principles of liberalism but shrank from the idea of popular government, he sees the rights of the people, but he instinctively limits those rights to the demand for justice and does not extend them to rights of self-government The power of self-government was to be obtained only through revolution, and Burke saw in that, primarily a rejection of traditions and institutions His extensive learning made him sensitive to the continuity of human development, and to the value of institutions which he very rightly regarded as the representatives of mature and accumulated wisdom As it was put by a philosophical radical of a later date, "Before the trumpet blast of natural right ' temple and tower went to the ground ' Burke pleaded the ancient rights in vain though with a power which has made all subsequent conservative writing superfluous and tedious Notwithstanding his violence and onesidedness, he had so much of the true philosophic insight that he almost alone among the men of his time caught the intellectual essence of the system which provoked him He saw that it rested on a metaphysical mistake, on an attempt to abstract the individual from his universal essence, *i.e.* from the relations embodied in habits and institutions which make him what he is and that thus to unclothe man, if it were possible, would be to animalise him " <sup>1</sup>

Burke formulated no theory of the State, he disliked all abstractions, but it is easy to see that his basis is the idea of human equality modified by natural

<sup>1</sup> T H Green *Works*, III 115

differences. He sympathised with the spirit of America in the struggle for independence, seeing clearly that to refuse liberty to the American people was to refuse liberty to the English: he denounced any form of government in India which was not under the principles of pure justice: he argued for the toleration of Irish Catholicism: in short, when the actual occasions presented themselves he saw them only as particular instances to which universal principles of the most liberal kind could be adapted and applied.

The defect most apparent in Burke was a lack of faith in the progress of the lower classes; they were to him always people who asked only to be governed uprightly, not to govern. Burke's strong point was his grasp of the significance of history, and his valuation of the permanent factors in every social structure. Bentham was the exact opposite; he cared nothing for history, and for that very reason could assert without reservations the right of self-government, dismissing Burke's enlightened aristocracy as a remnant of feudalism. The great argument on Bentham's side was the fact that the aristocracy of the period showed no enlightenment. Three crucial tests of the ruling interests occurred in the second half of the eighteenth century. The War of Independence and the loss of the American colonies was the outcome of one, showing the incapacity of the British to throw off their love of privileges. The rise of the Dissenters and the reaction in spiritual affairs, led by Wesley, was another result of narrow-mindedness in high places. Lastly, there was a rapid industrial

expansion destined ultimately to change the whole system of social gradations

Of this new movement Bentham became the spokesman. His mission was to formulate the ideas already vaguely stirring the minds of men. His formulation does not stand criticism now, it was never more than a perfunctory introduction to the work of reform, and taken apart from the reforms effected through it, it looks almost absurd. The average reader of Bentham (or works about Bentham), cheerfully acquiesces in the judgment that his maxim "the greatest good of the greatest number" is worthless, that his idea of measuring pleasures is absurd, that, in fact, his moral and political philosophy is a mere parody of a true theory. Fortunately, there are some who see further than this.<sup>1</sup> Bentham's theories can only be judged by the use he made of them, and so judged they cannot be lightly dismissed. To promote the greatest good of the greatest number is to apply to questions of social reform that very "reason" which Burke saw was contradicted by class selfishness. To take pleasures and pains as the basis for measuring social progress is to cast away the "indefeasible rights" which were obviously producing and increasing the misery of the people. To assert that every man should count for one and one only is to recognise that in a free country there must be freedom of opportunity and of action, limited only by the existence of a majority that opposes the action.

So far we see only the progressive spirit, but, as Burke's progressive thought stopped short of radical-

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., *M. Cunn Six Radical Thinkers*

ism, so Bentham's radicalism stops short of socialism. He will endure no "anarchic fallacies," and has no intention to meddle with the rights of property. In direct descent from Hobbes, he makes public security the prime object of the State; security for the present and security of expectation is the essential meaning of peace, order, and law. Bentham was always true to the interests that ruled his supporters, the economic interests. Security is for him the object of legislation, and security consists in an equilibrium of forces. Men are creatures of feeling and calculation; each aims at his own good, and it is the business of the State to make such arrangements that the private and public good coincide. If the desire for another's property is counteracted by the anticipation of punishment, so much the better for all. Life is penetrated by compensations. Nature dispenses pain for excesses; the law courts inflict punishment for transgression; society shows its disfavour to those who neglect etiquette; God punishes the sinner. So there are sanctions everywhere, the natural, the political, the social, the religious. In them lies the obligation to right conduct.

We may pause here to consider the stages through which the idea of justice has passed. In Hobbes it was the virtue of keeping covenants; in Hume it was right conduct in questions relating to property; in Bentham it appears as conformity to law. In all these treatments of the idea of Justice there is a degree of externality; and moralists have lost no opportunity of pointing out the defect. But we must not forget that Justice means for these writers a type of conduct,

the conduct which the State requires and which it enables a man to exact from another, when a deeper sense of duty is considered it is discussed under Benevolence, Justice being the name for that which is literally "owed" the "ought" in conduct. Justice can be demanded benevolence can only be desired. With this word of warning we may admit that this idea of conduct is, none the less defective just because it requires two terms and a distinction. By preserving such a distinction the social order is still presented as standing over against the individual, man and the State are still kept apart and this is no longer justifiable when we leave the political sphere and enter on the social. Utilitarianism took for its principle the common good, justice should then be that type of conduct which realises the common good, it should become not merely the "good of another" but the good of all which means the good of each individual regarded as standing in permanent relations to each other individual. Bentham is still at the stage when common good means the right of the majority over the minority, the right to force some to acquiesce in the demands of others. But this is only valid in questions of legal justice, referring especially to corrective justice. The criminal is to be coerced by the law, but for the normal man justice is the will to sustain the common good. Down to Bentham we seem to follow only a development of the idea of corrective justice, the emphasis falls naturally on repression, for we only require penalties to be enforced when there is a breach of justice. It was the work of J S Mill to supplement this with the idea of justice as the persistent will of

the citizen to fulfil the law. In J. S. Mill the ethical aspect is restored to its right place, and we return to Aristotle's view that corrective justice is only one phase of justice, and political administration only a part of a wider scheme of "Politics." Justice for J. S. Mill includes the following : (a) legal rights ; but as the law which makes those rights legal may be unjust, the term justice must include (b) the moral rights of individuals ; it includes also (c) the right to get what one deserves, (d) the keeping of promises, (e) acting impartially, (f) acknowledging the equality of others. Psychologically justice is derived from the feeling of resentment (against injury) and sympathy, that is the social instinct. It is natural because it is rooted in primitive instincts ; it is moral because it is regulated in and through the social environment. Here a balance is struck between two opposite conceptions. Some had spoken of justice as supernatural ; others had regarded it as artificial or imposed upon the individual by external powers ; Mill would regard it as neither of these, but rather as an essential element in all conduct which is truly and thoroughly social.

The problem which formed the subject of Hobbes' work now enters upon a new phase. Hobbes was concerned only with the question of the relation between impulse and restraint ; in other words, the justification of the restrictions implied in law. Locke saw that the rule of the people must be by the people, and that, in the last analysis, the obligation of obedience is due to the fact that laws express the will of the community. But to this position there are two objections. First there may not be, in many cases, the power to feel this

obligation in any actual society there will be found many who have no sense for the common good and do not grasp the idea of a common will. Second the common will often amounts in practice to the will of the majority and the old problem then returns in a new form. Why should the minority obey? Mill felt this difficulty very keenly. When we look back on the course of political thinking we see how the question has been totally changed. The writers of the sixteenth century were explaining why the majority should obey a minority and they practically never doubted that the rule of quality over quantity was an axiom. To day the crucial question is Why should the few obey the many? Is the right of the many to rule anything more than its might? Has not democracy after all converted its claim to establish liberty into a claim to rule by force? Neither Mill nor any one else has yet succeeded in removing this difficulty from the path of liberalism. But the Utilitarian can claim to have established two points: conduct must be controlled by a sense of duty which if it is not purely formal and subjective will be the conscientious application of the idea of a common good and secondly the only possibility of realising the ideal type of conduct lies in the power of giving to all such opportunities as will enlist their sympathy for and develop their talents in the progress of self government. At that point theory must give place to practice the science of conduct is not itself practical but it furnishes the theory which guides the practical activity of the reformer and defines his goal. For the individual the primary duty is to think. The State

takes upon itself the development of its members by providing opportunities, and the duty of the individual is to use those opportunities. J. S. Mill and Spencer have asserted this point most emphatically, and later thinkers have agreed that the main duty of the State is to remove all obstructions that hinder the development of individuals. If it is desirable to formulate an ideal for political ethics, as ethical systems formulate ideals of private conduct, we could perhaps find no better term than harmonious co-operation. In the more limited sphere of economics, where the good is more obvious to the average man, and the advantages of progress are more immediately seen, the idea of co-operation has won extensive favour. In the sphere of politics there is hope that in time society will be regarded as united, not only through the necessities of life, but through the more comprehensive ideal of the good life. The sentiment of Aristotle and the words of Burke cannot fail to rouse in the best minds of every generation a sense of their great worth. Society, says Burke, "is not a partnership in things subservient only to the gross animal existence of a temporary and perishable nature. It is a partnership in all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in every virtue and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born."



## APPENDIX

(a) The sources for this subject are mainly the following Milton, *Arcopagistica*; Hobbes, *Leviathan* (especially chaps xvii, xviii, and xxix-xxx), Locke, *Treatises of Government*, Hume, *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, and *Essays*, Rousseau, *Social Contract* (Eng trans), Burke, *Works* (especially "Reflections on the French Revolution") Bentham may be studied at first in the work of Dumont, Bentham's *Theory of Legislation* For J S Mill's views the *Utilitarianism* and the essay on *Liberty* are most important

(b) The literature of the subject is large The following books are mentioned as being likely to prove useful On the first part, Gooch, *English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century*, on Hobbes, in addition to Croom Robertson and other monographs, the student should read the chapter on English Political Philosophy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, by A L Smith in *Cambridge Modern History*, vol vi chap xxiii On Rousseau the literature is infinite, but for the point of view here taken the chapters in Bosanquet's *Philosophical Theory of the State* may be specially mentioned The subject of Natural Rights is dealt with in the work by D G Ritchie, *Natural Rights* Burke is the subject of a monograph by Morley, *Edmund Burke, A Historical Study*, there is another by J M'Cunn (1913) For the reforms due to Bentham see Dicey, *Law and Opinion in England*, and for Bentham and Mill there is no better introduction than the essays by M'Cunn in his *Six Radical Thinkers*

(c) Burke is particularly interesting to the student of political theories because of his ability to reduce actual cases to universal principles He is aristocratic in the old sense of the word, an advocate of the rule of the best He has the firm conviction that the best are few, the many cannot be the natural rulers of the State In this Burke consciously reproduces the theory of Aristotle He looks back to the days when the people had less power, and

forward to the days when they will have more. "If I recollect rightly, Aristotle observes that a democracy has many striking points of resemblance with a tyranny. Of this I am certain, that in a democracy the majority of the citizens is capable of exercising the most cruel oppressions upon the minority, whenever strong divisions prevail in that kind of polity, as they often must." This is the problem that occupied Mill, who obviously thought the prophecy was being fulfilled. So again Burke says, "A perfect democracy is the most shameless thing in the world," because in it there is no limiting power; the nation cannot be indicted. Burke clearly has no faith in the equality of man or in the rights of man; both of these seem to him contrary to nature. The first point may be illustrated by the following quotation: "In asserting that anything is honourable we imply some distinction in its favour. The occupation of an hairdresser, or of a working tallow-chandler, cannot be a matter of honour to any person. Such descriptions of men ought not to suffer oppression from the State; but the State suffers oppression if such as they, either individually or collectively, are permitted to rule." It must not be inferred from this that Burke had any narrow contempt for humanity; his moderation may be seen from the following passage: "Far am I from denying . . . the *real* rights of men. In denying their false claims of error I do not mean to injure those which are real, and are such as their pretended rights would wholly destroy. If civil society be made for the advantage of man, all the advantages for which it is made become his right." Burke seems to adopt something like the theory of the Christian Fathers that man has not a "liberty of error." Burke's writings are full of passages that have an equal claim to be quoted, but we must stop here: perhaps no other political writer is more full of sentiments that are of value to-day.

(d) The following paragraph from Prof. Dicey's *Law and Opinion in England* seems to state very accurately a point usually missed by those who deal with Benthamism from the standpoint of ethics in the narrow sense:

" Legislation deals with numbers and with whole classes of men morality deals with individuals Now it is obviously easier to determine what are the things which as a general rule constitute or rather promote the happiness or well-being of a large number of persons or of a State, than to form even a conjecture of what may constitute the happiness of an individual To ensure the happiness of a single man or woman even for a day is a task impossible of achievement , for the problem wherein may lie the happiness of one human being is, though narrow, so infinitely complex that it admits not of solution To determine, on the other hand, the general conditions which conduce to the prosperity of the millions who make up a State is a comparatively simple matter " The student, who may have been already much puzzled to discover what the question of the " hedonistic calculus " has to do with Benthamism, should pursue this line of thought as it is further elaborated by Prof Dicey I must add, in fairness to that author, that he does not confuse the sphere of law with that of morals, and his criticisms of the moral significance of the Benthamite formula are as definite as his statement of its meaning for legislation.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE RELIGIOUS ASPECT OF CONDUCT

§ 1. Now that we have considered the individual from the standpoint of the psychologist and from that of the political theorist, we may proceed to consider that part of public morality which takes on the form of religious organisation. A discussion of theological systems does not fall within our scope, but it is necessary to consider how far the development of religious thought has been affected by social and religious movements, while a parallel line of thought will lead us to consider how far ethical theories have been allied with religious rather than social questions.

The outcome of the struggle between Church and State, as we see it during the later Middle Ages, is a modification of both powers. The Protestant movement coincided with an increased nationalism, and along with the idea of national autonomy in secular affairs, went a corresponding demand for territorial churches. As the idea of a universal Empire lost its hold, the idea of a universal Church also ceased to be supreme. But a new problem arose within the nations, the problem of reconciling political

obedience with religious freedom. In the age of Luther we find that the most acute practical problems arise from the necessity of admitting both individual right of judgment in religious affairs, and also the supremacy of the ruler over his subjects. From this it became clear that religion must, in practice, be an affair of State, in some sense, and if the State is not supreme controller of religion within its limits, it must at least maintain some degree of authority.

The continental reformation had a direct effect upon England, spread from England to America, and returned from America back to England. This sequence of effects is seen in the history of the Independents. The established Church of England claimed a certain degree of independence, and followed the lines of the German reformation in a mild and conservative spirit. But even in the reign of Elizabeth an extreme form of independence and individualism was advocated by the sect called Brownists. Browne, the leader of this community, defined a church as "a company or number of Christians or believers, which, by a willing covenant made with their God, are under the government of God and Christ, and keep His laws in one holy communion." This was a clear and definite assertion of the independent status of a church, it was an emphatic separation of Church and State.

A doctrine of this kind does not belong to the traditions of Europe, it indicates a state of mind and a development of thought wholly antagonistic to feudalism, which was by no means extinct in the sixteenth century. The doctrine could hardly have

flourished without the advantages of a virgin soil and a new climate. It was, in fact, New England, and not Old England, that gave the Independents their true environment; Puritanism, languishing for want of greater freedom, migrated to those new lands that had no Catholic traditions; once established there, it found that men change their country more easily than their Constitution, that authority in some degree is essential to welfare, and that a love of independence may outrun the limits of convenience. In 1644 Roger Williams, an excommunicated member of the Puritan colony of Massachusetts, issued his plea for toleration, and practically revived the ancient doctrine that a political administration has no concern with religion. It would be a delicate task to estimate the good and the evil contained in this doctrine. The ancient world furnishes the first example of a disinterested government concerning itself with religion only when the religion was of political significance (v. p. 162). The spirit of the Christian Church and of the Middle Ages furnishes an example of the opposite condition. In the seventeenth century the position of the individual is wholly different from what it was in the ancient world, and for the new "independent" individual the problem had to be faced again. To some it may appear as though Williams adopted the attitude of Machiavelli, and cared nothing for the truth of a religion provided it served to make obedient subjects; to others this doctrine may represent the highest product of the logic of individualism. In any case the position was that of an extremist, and

involved too little regard for the deeper meaning of society

The reflex action of this movement in England is seen in the aims and doctrines of the Levellers. As the Independents carried to its extremest limit the radicalism of the Reformers so the Levellers were the extreme radical party in politics. There was much the same connection between religious and political ideas in the case of the Levellers as there had been in the case of the Lollards. But the Levellers worked with much more highly developed notions of the individual: they thought of each man and of his rights rather than of humanity or social classes. Consequently they were opposed not only to authority in general but to any specific form of it: they objected not only to the Roman Catholic but also to the Presbyterian method of organisation and discipline: nothing satisfied them but the man's own assent in religion or in politics: they came logically to the demand for universal suffrage and to an unlimited right of resistance. In all this they reflected very faithfully the spirit of the seventeenth century extremists. They show most clearly how that century was a period of ferment and experiments: how little it could foresee the fatal difficulty of a situation in which individuals are persistently against the government and man is opposed to the State: how finally it was necessary to pass through a period when every nerve was strained to control the ruler, into a new attitude of confidence and trust in government.

In spite of explicit doctrines of the opposition between Church and State the intensely religious

character of the seventeenth-century movements betrays the unity of political and religious life. It is perhaps not fair to substitute the word religion for church, or politics for state. The change serves, however, to indicate the permanent elements in the question; for disputes about Church and State are too often taken as the real question, though they are, in fact, only transitory phases of the social problem, the problem of giving politics that ultimate and supreme significance which necessarily makes it in some sense religious. But insight into this fact seems to have been temporarily absent in the seventeenth century, and has to be sought again in Burke.

Seen on the background of the Puritan and ultra-Puritan development the doctrine of Hobbes appears in sharp contrast. Hobbes, with his usual directness, subordinated religion to politics; but at the same time he made it clear that by religion he meant religious observances—in other words, the external manifestations of belief in public worship. Over belief as an inner state of the soul, over conscience, he rightly saw that there could be no control exercised by magistrates. This attitude toward the question was in keeping with Hobbes' view of the State, but it was distinctly inadequate. The religious life cannot be marked off as a department in that way. A form of worship is only a symptom, and it is as futile to suppress forms of worship without condemning beliefs as to enforce worship apart from beliefs. The problem therefore becomes a problem of toleration, which is ultimately a problem dependent upon the conflict of beliefs. As individualism gained ground the



problem became more acute. The right of the people to rule itself seems to lead, logically, to the right of absolute freedom in matters of religion. But in practice it becomes equally clear that national unity requires in modern as much as in ancient times, unity of religious thought. Persecution may be indefensible but on the other hand belief will only cease to assert itself against opposition when it has lost its own vitality. When the advocate of civil liberty comes to the questions of religion no course seems open except to compromise by reducing religious requirements to a minimum, and making that minimum as far as possible a matter of reason. This necessity is the key to the rationalising movements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Locke being a champion of civil liberty advocated toleration in matters of religion. We may take his "Letters on Toleration" as a typical treatment of the subject. In direct opposition to *Hobbes*, Locke pleads for liberty in worship as well as liberty of belief. He declares very truly that "all the life and power of true religion consists in the inward and free persuasion of the mind and faith is not faith without believing." In the main this cannot be denied, though Locke asserts a degree of individualism in religion which is neither desirable nor actually possible, personal beliefs are, in most cases, dependent upon established beliefs and the support of those who are recognised as authorities. Yet Locke is right in insisting that the understanding "cannot be compelled to the belief of anything by outward force." Accordingly Locke defines the Church as a "voluntary society of men," dissociating it

entirely from the State. It follows that any Church has a right to expel unruly members; excommunication is a legitimate mode of self-protection, and no doctrine of toleration can deny this right of self-protection. But, says Locke, no private person has any right in any manner to prejudice another in his civil enjoyments because he is of another Church or religion. Here we find a clear statement of the essential point, and, so far, it appears as though toleration would imply complete liberty of thought and action. But Locke has some exceptions to make: no opinions contrary to morality, no peculiar claims, such as that "dominion is founded on grace," no churches allied with foreign powers, and no "atheists" are to be tolerated. In these exceptions we see the defect of Locke's position; he names as exceptions those beliefs which have direct bearing on political action, and so really assumes that the State will tolerate only its own form of worship, together with others that are politically indifferent. He would exclude from the State those who did not accept the fundamental truths of Christianity, and his toleration amounts to nothing more than a diplomatic curtailment of the number of truths. Even this is done in the spirit of a disinterested critic, so that Locke seems to be manipulating the terms of a treaty rather than grappling with deep emotional tendencies. Here there is already a sign of that rationalising attitude which was the characteristic feature of the next century.

§ 2. The emancipation of thought moved by slow steps toward a declaration of the supremacy of reason.

As a reaction against *obscurantism* this was justified but in the sphere of practical problems it was neither more nor less than a return to the mediæval position that man is essentially rational. To those who were imbued with that idea it seemed possible to form a kind of religious constitution which all men would accept as a rational solution of religious problems. The outcome was a new type of religion the somewhat negative attitude called *Deism*. The progress of science showed that what were called "second causes," as distinguished from the First Cause furnished a complete explanation of the world which could therefore be treated as a going concern without reference to the Creator. The emancipation of science from the trammels of religious jurisdiction was strange to say, mistaken for an emancipation of the human mind from superstitions and religious emotions. It was undoubtedly a sign that some men were prepared to reject traditional dogmas and the attitude of these men quickly affected others who were more anxious to free themselves from the laws of God than to acquire a knowledge of the laws of nature. *Deism* was therefore negative it marked a revolt against tradition in favour of reason and was effective in shifting emphasis from religious belief to moral conduct but it entirely underestimated the force of religious sentiments and the extent to which they do not admit of direct and complete reduction to terms of reason.

The condemnation of *Deism* as "atheism" was an error in the opposite direction. It showed that the weakness of the religious enthusiasts lay in the tacit

assumption that there could be no religion apart from the acceptance of certain theological dogmas. Here we touch upon the central fact about intolerance, that it is not merely an opposition against other modes of thought but also includes in its condemnations questions that do not concern its real basis. Thus the believer in a certain creed not only condemns another's religious formulæ but adds to that an assertion of the other's inferiority in secular affairs. The crucial question is not whether an unbeliever can be a good theologian ; it goes without saying that he cannot ; but whether, being an unbeliever, he can still be a good politician or a respectable citizen. Locke's doctrine of toleration is inadequate, because he confines himself to the question how much religion a man must have to be tolerated. The age for that kind of discrimination was passed ; upon that basis one could only arrive at a hierarchy of heresies ; the new spirit demanded a complete recognition of the distinction between moral conduct and religious orthodoxy. The progress of science indirectly assisted this movement toward freedom because it made easier that interpretation of the divine government of man which was in harmony with the new ideas of civil liberty. In the sphere of science men looked for *natural* explanations of events ; in the sphere of politics there was a similar demand for a *natural* theory of the State ; and these tendencies were now associated with a similar tendency in the sphere of religion, the demand for a *natural* theology. Into the development of this we cannot now digress. Our present purpose is merely to indicate the steps by which the authoritative tradition of the mediæval

church came into the field of open discussion and so finally lost its claim to be regarded as absolute and beyond question. From that point onwards there has been a progressive recognition of the fact that religion is a name for the spiritual life that it must be spontaneous if it is to be valuable and that the right of co-operative action on the part of individuals holding a common belief cannot be denied.

§ 3 One of the most effective factors in disintegrating the church of the later Middle Ages was the spirit of mysticism<sup>1</sup>. The important feature of this was its assertion of a direct approach to God open to every individual believer. The spirit which expressed itself in this development of religious sentiment was opposed to the intervention of a priestly order between the individual and his God. In this movement we find the beginning of the various forms of nonconformity and dissent which belong to the last two centuries and indicate the growth of individual interest in the matters of religion. Piety is an individual quality and has no essential relation to any one formula of worship as a living sentiment it tends to produce its own formulæ rather than accept those previously in existence. Its vitality from Luther onwards is a welcome sign of the increase of religious interests both in extent and in power. Under republican forms of government the result tends to be an excessive development of private religions which seem ultimately to obscure the national ism that first fostered this growth of independence. The problem then arises of reconciling the individuality of pietism with the older idea that national unity

<sup>1</sup> Cp p 236

requires conformity in matters of religion. When this problem is not felt to be acute there is reason for believing that toleration is declining into indifference.

Mystical piety seems to have been, historically, the source for the more vigorous spiritual revivals, but there are, perhaps, still deeper sources. Regarded as one aspect of national developments, the various forms of nonconformity and dissent lead back to the Cartesian principle of doubt. This principle involves the idea which alone justifies all individual self-assertion, the idea that personal conviction is the living reality of truth. Descartes did not regard this principle as applicable only to science: it was a rule for all thinking, and if he did not choose to apply it to the sphere of dogma, there were many others ready and willing to follow the path indicated. This result was partially foreseen, but the whole effect of this appeal to individual certainty could only be shown through a long process of social as well as religious evolution. On the one hand the appeal to personal conviction took the form of a declaration of the rights of reason. Lessing in Germany rejected the idea that God could only be known through supernatural manifestations. He aimed to put religious belief on a fresh basis by rejecting the bondage of authority. As authority in this narrow sense was mainly the retention of traditions, we may say that Lessing was one of the first to emphasise the difference between origin and validity. The historical truth is, for Lessing nothing apart from the belief which the individual accords to it: the truths of history, he says, can never be made the proof for truths of reason, for these are only known through

the mind itself, either in its intellectual or in its emotional capacity. In thus insisting on the inner realisation Lessing is applying to religion that principle of emotional realisation which was the essence of the romantic movement in other departments of the spiritual life. through it man and nature and God were to be united in a new fulness of life such as Spinoza described and Goethe or Schiller embodied in poetry.

This was the form which the movement took on the higher planes of culture. Kant, in spite of much elaborate machinery was also stating little more than this fundamental truth, that "in the consciousness of man lay the certification and authority of all truth." Here too the old principle of authority was rejected and the inner conviction put in its place. And that point was a connecting link between the philosophers and the theologians, and such humbler enthusiasts as the Pietists, the Evangelicals, and the Methodists. In these sects we see again that persistent tendency toward the assertion of active convictions against sterile dogmas, which was the moving force of Orphism (p. 37), of early Christianity, and of the Continental Reformation. Each of these movements has a character relative to its time and place but they have also an unmistakable family likeness. One common feature is the social character of these movements. The belief becomes a bond of unity. a new sense of fellowship springs up fostered by the mystic element in the relationship of men as sons of God. For those who can feel this essential dependence of all men upon God, the idea that society is only a contract or a com-

promise is destroyed by the burning zeal of fellowship. But it must be admitted that there are some who cannot share this emotional exaltation. Pietism, like mysticism, is too much a matter of temperament to be altogether universal. Religious revivals are reactions which owe their intensity to the demand for reaction : their force is measured by the strain put upon their leaders. The eighteenth century revivalism is no exception to this law, and, while it is true that such movements seem to be required in order to counteract degeneration and corruption, it is equally true that they are from the first condemned to the Nemesis that destroys all extremes. The abiding power of religion cannot be found in the exaggeration of feelings : the spiritual life must make for itself channels of expression in that which it too hastily condemns as " the world " : it must absorb, unify and recreate art, literature, and science : and so again find stability in its alliance with reason.

§ 4. We have indicated the steps by which religion was marked off from the domain of morality as the sphere of good and bad conduct. We have seen also how there arises from this distinction the demand that repression should be limited to those cases where the action of the individual is harmful to others, and that beliefs as such should not be subject to civil control. The other aspect of this subject, now to be considered, is the relation of religion to theories of conduct. In modern ethics there are two very distinct tendencies. One is that which is called naturalistic ; the other is theological in origin and idealistic in form. The theological doctrine begins from the



belief that there is in man a distinctive element in some sense divine or supernatural. For this school the source of moral judgments is a faculty called conscience<sup>1</sup> a unique power of determining right and wrong. As this doctrine makes the power of moral judgment an endowment of man which is inherent in his nature there was a superficial resemblance between the doctrine of conscience and the doctrine of innate ideas. But as the latter makes the power of judging moral questions natural to all men its results were directly opposed to the position of the theologians. In its first form the doctrine of innate ideas was a theory of the nature of man according to which every man had by nature a knowledge of the fundamental moral truths. Being a natural explanation of universal morality this formed part of the deistic movement and tended to make morality natural rather than supernatural. The fundamental difficulty for the supporters of a rigid theory of conscience was to make the moral judgments adequate to all the varieties of experience and this difficulty finally changes the definition of conscience. Instead of being a faculty it becomes a function that particular function of the reason which is manifested in judgments of right and wrong. Against the followers of Hobbes—whose disciples outdid the master in reducing all the contents of the mind to sense given data—Cudworth and Clark defended an intellectual view of the moral judgments while the moral sense school tried to show that moral judgments were the function of a sense analogous to æsthetic sense.

<sup>1</sup> See above p. 244

neither pure intellect nor mere sensation. The psychological groundwork of these theories was inadequate, but on the whole the moral sense school held the strongest position. What was required was a theory that would successfully explain the apparent immediacy of our judgments of right and wrong, and yet make intelligible the obvious difference in the "consciences" of individuals. In other words, this was one more case of a false universal; so long as people talked of "conscience" and not of "consciences," there could be no advance, and the required transition from the universal "conscience" to the individual "consciences" was only possible after the idea of personality had become clearer in other relations. The fact that consciences vary with differing times and persons inevitably led to the naturalistic position that conscience is, in respect of its content, a product of experience. By substituting "experience" for "sense-experience" the fallacy of the earlier theories was avoided and the dispute between sensationalists and intellectualists dropped into oblivion. If conscience is regarded as a power of judgment peculiar to moral agents and dependent upon external conditions for the objects of its judgment, both the imperative character of its dictates and their variability seem to be explained. This solution was seen to a large extent by Butler. In Butler the conscience is a power of inward approval or condemnation which has its origin in the individual's consciousness of his own motives. Every moral agent can, as a matter of fact, realise in his own reflective thought whether, in his action, he followed

what he himself regards as the better or the worse course. So far there is no necessity to know whether the action was good or bad for others, a man may feel that he has done his best even when he deplors the actual result, and in this sense his conscience may be void of offence before God. If we look more deeply into the principles of his approval or disapproval we may find them relative to the individual's training, and Butler admits that education has an influence on the formation of consciences. Butler's "education" is only that of the individual, to obtain a more complete view of the matter we have to look forward to the work of Spencer and the evolutionary theory of morals, there we find the ideas of racial development of social (as distinct from individual) heredity and the whole doctrine of the evolution of conscience. Before that more complete development of the subject we find only such indications of a new view as are expressed by Butler and by Hume. In J. S. Mill the idea of a natural conscience is clearly expressed. For him conscience is an accumulated mass of feeling and by that formula he intends us to understand that there is no supernatural element which distinguishes the moral consciousness from any other aspect of consciousness, but that there is, psychologically, a distinct quality about moral judgments which is to be explained by the fact that they are the forms in which character expresses itself when we are called upon to choose between possible lines of action. Mill and Spencer agree in admitting that moral judgments have an intuitive character, but they are free from the con-

fusion of mind which led earlier thinkers to mistake this for a proof of supernatural origin.

The doctrine of conscience is the central feature of ethical theories that are expressly allied to religious doctrines. The history of the idea of conscience is a history of the expansion of the idea of man as in some sense divine. It is an example of the way in which thought moves from the particular conception of a divine element in man to the idea of a divine order in the universe such that experience is a progressive revelation of the eternal and immutable truths. To regard man as "natural" was at first an "atheistical" position. Reason triumphed over this self-imposed restriction and set itself free to regard man and nature as both in some sense divine. With this advance in thought the interests which supported the earlier doctrine of conscience were silently removed. It remains to see how the question of the content of conscience, the moral law, was treated in accordance with this development.

§ 5. A purely theological ethics takes for its basis the law of God as revealed to man. But in practice the law requires interpretation, and in addition to the actual revelation of the Scriptures, the interpretations of the Fathers are accepted as part of the whole meaning of the scriptural law of life. This expansion makes room for the question why some persons should be regarded as authorities rather than others. Unless the right to interpret the law is based upon superior wisdom it can scarcely be defended at all; and if the defence is offered, the limitations of time and place can be urged in proof of the necessity of fresh inter-

pretations for succeeding ages. In this way the barriers erected against new ideas on questions of morality are removed and here as elsewhere we see that this is done in the name of reason. The conclusion is a general admission that the rational and the right are ultimately identical. the moral government of the world is not an arbitrary ordering of the universe but an arrangement of things in accordance with the Reason of God intelligible to man because it is essentially a manifestation of Intelligence. But human intelligence is dimmed by passions. the individual's judgment is liable to error not because of any inherent defect in reason but because human reason as an individual power is always linked to passions. It seems consequently that if universal validity could be obtained for the judgment of individuals the errors arising from the particular nature of individual men would be overcome. The attempt to secure this result by making the reason abstract was a failure. The reliance placed at one time on the pure action of reason was undermined by the progress of psychology which finally removed that fiction. If there is no abstract reason capable of acting apart from all emotions where shall we look for the universal validity of moral judgments? The only answer that seemed possible was to assert the universal validity of judgments that had universal application. In other words if the accepted principle is based upon the good of all men rather than individual good such a principle will approach to ideal rightness. In the eighteenth century the demoralising influence in conduct seemed to be self love. To get beyond

this it was necessary to attain an outlook not limited to personal advantage. Thus the social good, or the good of the greatest number, was regarded at once as a better principle and a surer guide to ideal goodness. Butler and Adam Smith state this in different ways. According to Butler, a man may review his conduct "in a cool hour," that is to say, in the lucid intervals when reason is unclouded; and the judgments then formed will be free from prejudice or passion. But this statement involves the assumption that in a "cool hour" we inevitably think what is right. Butler, in fact, works with the concept of the ideal man, and is not free from the mediæval dogma that reason, when unclouded by passion, is necessarily free from error. Butler was opposed to "enthusiasm," and anxious to counteract the doctrine of religious enthusiasm which was gaining ground in his day. But in trying to get away from religious individualism, he failed to see that his own criterion remained essentially individual. The cool hours of a determined villain could produce nothing but a clear insight into the means to achieve immoral ends. Adam Smith tries to evade this difficulty by recognising in the individual the power of sympathy, by which the judgment of the individual is made that of an impartial spectator. Whether this is possible or not need not be discussed, because in effect it amounts to a complete abandonment of individual standpoints in favour of a social standard.

§ 6. Adam Smith really abandons the line of theological ethics and adopts that of social ethics. This leads toward the idea of morality as determined by

utility, which we find explicitly stated by Hume and consistently developed by his successors. Hume, too, was one of the "atheists." He was an eloquent adherent of Natural Theology and his ethical doctrine was also "natural." For him the main virtue is that called Justice, and we find this the central theme of his successors. For Hume, justice is a virtue called forth by the existence of social relations, it is not "natural" in the sense that all men have an instinct for justice, or in the sense that any meaning could be given to it if man lived a solitary non social life, it is "artificial" in the sense that it comes into being in and through the progressive development of society. It soon became obvious that this treatment of justice was vitiated by being taken too narrowly and with too much limitation to the sphere of economics. Bentham was mainly interested in the judicial regulation of conduct and made no contribution to the purely ethical aspect of justice though he furthered the cause of utilitarianism by practical reforms which showed what actual value the idea of a "common good" might have in the progress of society. A more complete exposition of the idea of justice was given by J. S. Mill, whose chapter on Justice in *Utilitarianism* reunited the idea of rightness in conduct with that of goodness. The element which is wanting in the earlier utilitarians is the concept of the good will. Their work was primarily the evolution of a criterion of good conduct, which they find in the common good. In their terminology, if the action tends to bring about the greatest good of the greatest number it is an action fit to be called good. But this would apply

to actions which accidentally produced that result. Mill, being more directly aware of the fact that will is essential to morality, sees that an action to be good in the proper sense must not only produce such a result but be intended to produce it. Justice, in this interpretation, is not only a quality of action, but also of agents, and the moral agent is distinguished by having the virtue of justice, that is to say, having the will to be just. Thus utilitarianism, as interpreted by Mill, combines a concrete method of determining when an action is good with the formal demand for goodness of will. In this we have a distinct revision of the utilitarian position due to the influence of Kant. It will be necessary at this point to go back a little and discover the meaning of Kant's ethical doctrine.

Mill tells us himself that the utilitarian view of morality was condemned as "godless." The origin of that condemnation is seen at once when we turn to Kant. Ever since the day when Plato divided soul from body there had been supporters of the false asceticism which attached to the senses and their pleasures the idea of necessary inferiority. To this class belonged the recluse and the hermit; in later days the priest and the Puritan developed the same tendencies. Kant exhibits the same strain with one great difference; he does not oppose soul and body, but speaks of reason and sensation. In his terminology he therefore approaches most nearly to the Stoic view. His whole doctrine of morality rests upon this primary assumption, that reason is not only distinct from but superior to sensation. Granted this position, it is easy to see that morality must be



an affair of reason, and moral conduct will be that kind of action which is guided solely by reason. Action must, of course, be generated by desire, but man differs from the animals in being possessed of reason, and it is his peculiar privilege to be able to guide his actions by the rule of reason. So far, Kant's position does not differ essentially from Aristotle's eudaimonism, but Kant himself rejects the Aristotelian doctrine in favour of a pure morality, that is a morality which is not affected by any elements of a sensuous origin. Logically this is correct. If there are rules of conduct, they must be universal to some degree and must be applied to the circumstances under which action takes place, not derived from those circumstances. Then, again, a universal law must hold good for others as well as ourselves, and so far it must be independent of particular personal inclinations. In a word, the law is an obligation which does not vary with inclination, or, as Kant would say does not depend upon pathological affections. This does not differ essentially from the earlier idea, that morality is an affair of conscience, and must be disinterested. If Kant had followed the lead of earlier theologians, he would have passed at this point to the idea of a revealed law, which infallibly indicates and requires us to obey unconditionally. But this is not his doctrine. He takes his stand on reason, and he may justly be asked to show how the law of reason is to be separated absolutely from the feelings of the individual. Kant is undoubtedly right in maintaining, against a pure sensationalism, that reason is essential to moral goodness, and that the law of reason must not be

made subservient to feeling in such a way that we follow it or desert it as we please. His assertion that there is nothing good except the good will, is a true statement of the formal essence of goodness. In the sphere of science, a truth is regarded as true quite apart from the question whether the individual likes it or not. But this analogy exhibits the very defect which spoils Kant's doctrine. The object of morality is the good, and not merely the true; in action, there must be some motive power and, therefore, some feeling. Seeing this, Kant tried to amend his doctrine by making reverence for the law into a motive power, but in so far as this reverence is a feeling, it takes us beyond pure reason and leaves us with the simple position that right conduct depends upon right feelings.

It is now clear that Kant is in the very same position as the supporters of conscience; he defines the nature of moral obligation as a sense of duty but cannot further explain the moral life. As a logic of morality his system stands supreme, and it might be said that a moral theory can go no further; general principles have a value of their own and the concrete application must be left to the individual. Kant certainly evolves the most universal formal principles and thereby furnishes a way of testing all actions. The fundamental law is "act so that the law of thy action may be taken as law universal," and it is clear that this does express a principle which is a supreme test of action. But does this go beyond such a maxim as "do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you"? And has anything been gained by starting with the

idea that reason is opposed to feeling? Kant appears to have worked out a utilitarian principle and stated it under the influence of a theological tradition. He combines a rationalistic formula with a strong religious feeling, producing an admirable doctrine in contradiction to his own premisses.

If Kant's position with its implied rejection of a revealed law of morality, seems morally more elevated than utilitarianism, we may ask ourselves where is the particular element in utilitarianism that makes it inferior? The answer is that utilitarianism involves the feelings. But if the feelings are not essentially bad, if there are in human nature noble sentiments and lofty aspirations, utilitarianism certainly claims them to serve its ends. Kant himself states elsewhere the whole essence of the utilitarian doctrine, in his "Idea of a Universal History" he postulates as the beginning a conflict of desires like that described by Hobbes, then there is a stage of civilisation when social control regulates the individual impulse, finally there is a stage of moralisation when religion, custom, and education make the individual's desires coincide with the right. The ideal state of man is, in this scheme, identical with the stage of complete development of all the natural powers. If we remember this part of Kant's work when reading his treatise on the Practical Reason we see that his idea of morality is ultimately more concrete than it appeared to be.

Kant objected to the way in which utilitarianism as seen in Bentham and Paley, made moral conduct dependent on pleasure and pain. He objected to this particularly in the sphere of religion, where the induce

ment to be good is often made to consist in the hope of eternal rewards or fear of eternal punishments. Such morality is ultimately mere prudence, and Kant believes that virtue consists in self-determination, not in being determined by external sanctions. But that does not prevent us from seeing that ultimately the fear of God is only operative with those people who do fear God. A "transcendent" basis of obligation is useless in morals because "the sanction, so far as it is disinterested is always in the mind itself."<sup>1</sup> Kant's belief that the essence of morality is the self-determining will of the agent is a different way of saying the same thing. Finally, as Kant held that ultimately goodness and happiness must coincide (though it be only in Heaven), so the utilitarian believes that the attainment of universal happiness is a mark of that kind of action which tends to fulfil the purpose of God in the creation of man.

## APPENDIX

(a) REFERENCES.—For the Independents and other movements of the seventeenth century, see Gooch; Leslie Stephen, *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* on Deism; Allen, *The Continuity of Christian Thought*, on Pietism and Dissent; also, on a larger scale, Pfeiderer, *Philosophy of Religion*, vol. i. (1886). Kant's philosophy is only referred to here in order to explain some phases of J. S. Mill's doctrine; further light may be obtained from Sidgwick, *History of Ethics*, or the monographs on Kant, (e.g. Adamson's), but the subject must be treated on the

<sup>1</sup> See Mill, *Utilitarianism*, p. 43 (Longmans, 1901). The references to Kant should be observed carefully and Mill's view compared with Kant's in reference to practical application.

basis of Kant's own writings, and lies beyond the scope of this Introduction

(b) In order to elucidate further the spirit of the eighteenth century, I transcribe the following passage from Allen, p. 341 ff. —

“The importance attached to the religion of nature is the most prominent characteristic of formal theology in the eighteenth century. In any attempt to trace the development of Christian thought, the profoundest significance must be attributed to the fact that natural theology should have taken the place of revealed religion, as the one absorbing subject of human interest and inquiry. In a change like this there was implied a revolution at the very basis of Christian theology. The extent of the change, which the transition reveals, may be seen by reverting to the time when Thomas Aquinas first made the memorable distinction between natural and revealed religion. He had made the distinction in the interest of revealed religion, either for the purpose of carrying out his analogy between the kingdoms of nature and of grace, or in order to get rid of speculative difficulties which had been raised by the progress of heresy. But in the thirteenth century no practical importance was assigned to the distinction. Natural religion had been passed over as unworthy of the notice of those to whom a revealed theology had been intrusted. In the eighteenth century the situation was reversed. revealed religion was sinking into abeyance or neglect, while the religion of nature commanded an almost exclusive attention.

‘But the transition was not a sudden one. The preparation for it had been going on within the human consciousness, in obscure and devious ways, from the time when Latin theology had emphasized the separation of humanity from God on the one hand, or from nature on the other. In the ready acceptance of the miraculous, which was characteristic of popular Christianity from an early date, may be seen the traces of a surviving though latent belief in some organic relationship between man and his environment. The marvels and wonderful legends of the Middle

Ages were the substitutes for science. The taste for the miraculous points to a view of nature which sees in it the reflection of the human spirit, as if it contained a response to humanity in its deeper moods or in the crises of its career. In the marvellous effects which were wrought by relics and dead men's bones, in the recuperative power that lurked in the touch of a holy man, in the inanimate images that winked or bowed in response to prayers,—in the belief in these was an unconscious testimony to the truth that the material world stands in close relation to the experience and aspirations of the human spirit. We may read the same unconscious testimony in Gothic architecture, as if, when the Teutonic people first gave expression to the spiritual life that stirred within them, they were inspired by the ancient religion of nature with its cultus developed in the native forests of Germany, before Christianity had reached them. Now and then, at rare intervals, we hear voices in the Middle Ages like those of Bernard of Clairvaux or Francis of Assisi, which tell of an intimate relationship between man and nature, although the bond that unites them is still concealed. Bernard speaks almost in a modern strain of his delight in nature; 'You will find something,' so he writes, 'far greater in the wood than you will in books. Trees and stones will teach you that which you will never learn from masters.' In the exquisite sites selected for their monasteries, as in England by the Cistercian and Carthusian monks, it has been thought may be read the growing inclination for communion with nature, for which the heart hungered, while its study was condemned as fatal to the well-being of the soul."

(c) Since the departments of the social order and the different functions of society are always closely connected, it is usually true that a change in one part is a change in all. An interesting example is afforded by the religious and political developments in the eighteenth century. The inner connection is thus explained by Dicey, *Law and Opinion in England*, 400: "Benthamism and Evangelicalism represented the development in widely different spheres of the same fundamental principle, namely, the

principle of individualism The appeal of the Evangelicals to personal religion corresponds with the appeal of Benthamite Liberals to individual energy The theology which insisted upon personal responsibility and treated each man as bound to work out his own salvation had an obvious affinity to the political philosophy which regards men almost exclusively as separate individuals and made it the aim of law to secure for every person freedom to work out his own happiness

## EPILOGUE

THE limit set for this book has now been reached. So far as it is possible, the reader has been given specimens of action and of theory without bias or prejudice. The story has its moral, but it is no part of the volume to dictate that moral. The facts have been selected in the hope that they would truly fulfil the function of an introduction; they will, in that case, induce the reader to enlarge his acquaintance with any or all of the periods indicated, and to supply some of the material which it has been necessary to omit; they will, perhaps, enable others to see more clearly the significance and bearing of our present problems. Innumerable questions suggest themselves at once: the future of democracy, the relation of public to private morality, the meaning of religion for the State and for the individual, the power and the weakness of reason or of feeling—such problems as these must still be considered with varying degrees of anxiety and responsibility. For those who would learn how we stand to-day or anticipate the future as it is depicted by modern prophets, there is an abundant and ever growing literature. So far as was suitable, this account has not trespassed beyond the earlier part of the nineteenth century; it has spoken of Machiavelli and said nothing



of Nietzsche, it has lingered over the fate of past empires and said nothing of the empires of to-day, it has argued with Burke on one side and with Bentham on the other side, it has brought upon the scene the works of authority and the claims of freedom without any attempt to estimate the present rights of majorities or the present value of religious freedom. These are the subjects upon which those who think must exercise their powers of judgment, whatever may be the ultimate value of history there can be little doubt of the advantages derived from seeing how similar problems have been treated in the past and with this indication of its object and its outlook, our Introduction may be concluded

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